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UPHILL

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THE FIRST STAGE IN
A STRENUOUS LIFE

BY

JOHN EVELYN WRENCH

MCMXXXIV

IVOR NICHOLSON & WATSON, LTD.
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DEDICATION

*Tibi quae, sive lucente benigno
sole sive tempestate minante,
cum tenerum cum seniore,
me, velut sidera nautes, direxisti.*

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PREFACE

I WONDER if many people start off with the intention of writing one kind of book and end up by writing something entirely different, as I have done. This is how it happened. Just before Christmas 1932 the B.B.C. asked me to give a talk on "The World and Ourselves." I took for my central idea the thought that the loyalties of a citizen to his own country, to Europe and to the world need *not* conflict; that it was possible to be an ardent supporter of the British Commonwealth and at the same time to be equally enthusiastic for the cause of World Unity.

I concluded my broadcast by expressing the hope that some of my listeners would send me a postcard stating their views, either assenting or dissenting. After the Christmas holidays I returned to *The Spectator* office, expecting to find two or three hundred postcards. Instead I found in the entrance hall a large packing case containing 7,915 letters and postcards from every part of Great Britain. The writers of 7,761 said they agreed with me, only 154 disagreed.

Evidently the subject of the varying allegiances of the citizen was of considerable interest. While I was convalescing from an attack of influenza a year ago I set out with the intention of writing a book describing how I became a "world patriot," and explaining the mental stages through which I had passed. After writing the book I found my canvas was too big. I decided therefore to divide my life into two. In *Uphill*, which terminates with my return from my pilgrimage round the Empire in 1912-13, I describe my evolution as a worker for the cause of Imperial Unity.

Some of my friends who are keen Imperialists cannot understand my enthusiasm for the cause of World Unity. Other friends, who are "internationalists," do not share

my enthusiasm for the British Empire. I think it is perfectly possible to have these two allegiances.

In a world which is above all threatened by disintegration, the great need is obviously *integration*—unity. If the stresses of history have given us a great unifying force like that, whatever it is, which holds the British Empire together, we cannot afford to discard it.

It was the genius of Lincoln to see that Union came before the abolition of slavery. His instinct was right. For had the United States gone to pieces freedom would not have been more secure but less. The same truth applies to the British Commonwealth.

If we can preserve the Unity of the British Empire, a world-state consisting of every race, creed, colour and class living in some eighty territories scattered round the seven seas, we have given a practical demonstration that World Unity is feasible. For if we can obtain unity and abolish war from among one quarter of mankind, why cannot the same enlightened methods ultimately achieve similar results among the remaining three-quarters of mankind?

JOHN EVELYN WRENCH.

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LAWRENCE STREET,
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CHILDHOOD AND BOYHOOD
1882—1900

CHAPTER I

A YOUTHFUL PATRIOT

I HAVE often wished I could recall what is the first thing I remember as a child. I have always envied those who seem able to catch back from the past early thoughts and feelings. Perhaps if I had some very distinct memory it would provide the key to my subsequent interest in the world, in far places, in different nations, in humanity.

One of my earliest recollections is being taken by my father for a journey in Jubilee year, 1887, from County Fermanagh in Northern Ireland, where I was born, to Dublin. I remember vaguely wanting to go from one window of the railway carriage to the other, and watching a very green world rush by. Presumably I kept asking my long-suffering father endless questions as was my wont in childhood.

How my father discovered that there was one infallible method of keeping me quiet I do not know. Anyhow he possessed the secret. He knew that his small son of five adored the catalogue of the Army and Navy Stores, whence we obtained many of our household requirements. He, therefore, used to give me this precious volume, with which he always travelled when in my company, to occupy me. Long before I could read I would spend hours absorbed in poring over the pages of this book.

I forgot my surroundings, even the excitement of a railway journey, in this magic world in which I now wandered. Page after page of pictures captured my attention, tents, men in tropical helmets, high-stepping horses in harness, conjuring outfits, clocks and cameras, canteens, furniture, summerhouses, boats, canoes, naval and military uniforms. My parents owed a lasting debt to the Army & Navy Stores for the tranquillising effect its catalogue had on a restless little boy with an enquiring mind. Even to this day I can

never pass No. 105 Victoria Street without a sense of the past coming back to me. And when I was able to read, these bulky catalogues had a fascination for me, only to be supplanted a few years later, when I was at my private school, by Whitaker's Almanack, Stanley Gibbons' Postage Stamp catalogues and Bradshaw's Railway Guide. Anything that told of places far and near exercised a spell over me, just as the world of music and sound entranced Jean Christophe in Romain Rolland's immortal story—far countries and foreign peoples were my wonder world. A travelling salesman introduced a fortnightly or monthly publication into our home called the *Peoples of the World*—further stimulus for the wanderlust in a boy's mind.

The County of Fermanagh was certainly the right place for a patriot to be born in. Feeling ran high and the two sections of the community, Protestant and Loyalist—Roman Catholic and Nationalist were almost equally divided. I was brought up in a world split into the two camps of orange and green. My family belonged to the former and "King Billy" was our political deity. An attempt to understand the other fellow's point of view, in either camp, would have been frowned on and the hundred per cent. patriotism of the average Ulsterman in the eighties, whether Loyalist or Home Ruler, would have satisfied even a Hitler or a Mussolini.

In the eighties, the activities of the Land League and of the Fenian organisations were much in people's minds, and ever since the Phoenix Park murders of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Thomas Henry Burke there had been growing tension. My earliest recollection of patriotic sentiment is connected with the Orange demonstrations on the Twelfth of July and my brother,* who was five years my senior, and I gave outlet to our loyalty by donning orange sashes embellished with blue, as worn by our elders, watching the Orange processions and listening to the bands. Jokes about the Pope were popular in Protestant circles and I recall one friend high up in the Orange hierarchy telling us of the unpleasant reception which awaited His Holiness

* F. A. C. Wrench, subsequently Sub-Lieut. in the Central India Horse, who died in 1903.

should he ever be misguided enough to "show his nose in Portadown."

Michael Davitt, the Irish Nationalist leader, was pointed out to me as a representative of the forces of Darkness. When we came to live in County Dublin we children frequently used to see him on our walks. He made a sinister figure to a child, with the empty sleeve of his coat pinned to his breast, and his dark beard. I asked no questions. Davitt was a Nationalist and therefore in league with the Evil One. In an early letter after returning to my private school, I wrote home, "I got into a very nice carriage and from it I saw Davitt looking more horrible than ever." It never occurred to me to ask what Davitt's particular crime was and why Nationalists and Roman Catholics were beyond the pale. It was only when I grew up that I was puzzled by the conundrum: "Why was an Englishman permitted to be a hundred per cent. Nationalist, a right denied to an Irishman?"

These early prejudices took many years to shake off! I long regarded Irish Nationalists with suspicion. But although I was brought up in a circle unsympathetic to the dreams of Irish Nationalism, my father had very definite ideas as to Great Britain's duty to Ireland. He was appointed one of the Irish Land Commissioners in 1887 and from then onwards he took a deep interest in the Congested Districts, to whose Board he was appointed. He travelled throughout Western and Southern Ireland with Mr. Arthur Balfour, who became Chief Secretary in 1886, and he played a prominent part in building up the Congested Districts Board into the great agency it subsequently became. My father was an Englishman, but during the fifty-two years of his life in Ireland, no Irishman could have given more whole-hearted service to the country.

The Congested Districts Board owned a steam-yacht called the *Granuaile*, named after an early Irish Saint. In the summer my father and other members of the Board used to go for tours of inspection round the beautiful coast of Southern and Western Ireland. On several occasions these tours coincided with my holiday. Among the happiest memories of my boyhood were voyages on the

Granuaile around the Irish Coast and visits to remote places, where only Irish was spoken, and to Achill and Tory Islands. I had always loved the sea and I wanted to enter the Navy, an ambition that was frustrated owing to a delicate childhood, so these cruises were red-letter occasions.

The cup of joy almost overflowed when we were out on the open sea, pitching and plunging through Atlantic rollers in a head wind. I stood beside the Captain on the bridge and was allowed to steer the vessel myself for half an hour on end and give the electric signals to the engine-room. Arrived in harbour we stayed two or three days, as there was a succession of functions. Horse and cattle shows to encourage the peasants to improve their stock, at which I was allowed to distribute the coloured rosettes to the prize winners; fish-curing establishments or local industries to be visited, or modern farm and dairy buildings to be inspected. At one of these shows I had my one and only experience of horse coping. All the best mares of the neighbourhood and their foals were assembled. There was a dear little chestnut foal with a white star on its forehead. We became great friends. All these people owned horses of their own. Why should I not become a horse-owner? I would love to have that foal. I had a nest-egg of golden sovereigns for emergencies. Might I buy the foal? My father, ever indulgent, said "Yes." The bargaining started. A crowd of "natives" gathered round. I commenced by an offer of a pound. The owner was obdurate. I doubled the price. He still refused. I offered a pound for each of the foal's legs—still no luck. I would have "Starlight," named after Rolf Boldrewood's hero. I saw myself careering across the plains on his back. I made one final offer "a quid a leg and one chucked in for the tail." Such an offer could not be refused; "Starlight" was mine. I led away my horse to the plaudits and tittering of the crowd. My father made me a present of him.

I do not know at which particular moment I wished to become an engine-driver, but my passion for railways lasted for many years. When in bed with chicken-pox and recovering from measles, much of my time was spent

poring over railway time tables. I proposed to amalgamate all the railways in the British Isles under the title the "Great British and Irish Railway Company," and I wanted to build a railway ferry between the two countries. I planned new railway routes. My railway was to go right round Ireland. I issued time tables and instructions. A first-class ticket over the entire system was to cost £8 10s. od., I see from an old record.

One Christmas holiday the General Manager of the then Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford Railway invited me to spend the day with him. We went the whole length of the line, in a special saloon carriage. On arrival at Wexford I was given a lunch which started with mysterious things on shells, tasting of the sea, with red pepper and brown bread and butter—my first introduction to oysters. On the return journey I travelled back on the engine of the "Limited Mail" and I was allowed to drive the engine between stations, the engine driver standing beside me and taking the regulator when we approached a stopping place.

Another happy memory was a day at York railway station. My family were staying at the Station Hotel for an agricultural show and I was allowed to spend all the day at the station—a paradise for a boy with a passion for railways. I made elaborate lists of all the incoming and outgoing trains from the notice boards and I considered it my duty to meet every train and to see that it departed "on time." Occasionally I would be in a quandary when two trains arrived in different parts of the station simultaneously, how could I be sure all would go well in my absence? As I watched the Aberdeen express glide from the departure platform I liked to feel that I was responsible for its punctuality in my make-believe world.

During Continental journeys I played variations of my railway game, though I don't think I was able to roam at will about the platforms of foreign stations. The magnificently attired railway officials in Germany would have regarded with suspicion an English boy, whose sole occupation appeared to be consulting time tables and running from platform to platform all day long. On some journeys I used to shut myself for an hour on end in the lavatory

compartments of the trains in which we were travelling. Here I would stand by the open window absorbed in my task of "driving the train" which consisted in pulling levers and turning on and off the hot and cold water taps. Alas, my indulgent parents had finally to put a stop to this game as it led to altercations with other passengers!

During the summer one of my favourite occupations was to spend my time in "my house in the tree-tops." There was a splendid ash tree in our grounds. I persuaded our gardener to build a platform in a large fork of the tree. A rail was built all round the platform: by degrees improvements were added. It was almost like a tree-dweller's hut, similar to the pictures in my *Peoples of the World*. A rough ladder led to my arboreal abode. I brought my books and other household gods up there. Among the latter was "Dicky," my canary. Dicky, his cage suspended by a piece of cord from an overhanging branch, enjoyed his days in the trees as much as I did. But disaster came. I returned home one afternoon to find poor Dicky's cage on the ground and Dicky, with ruffled feathers, huddled in a corner. The string had broken.


The next day Dicky died.

I cried bitter tears of sorrow. I was taken out to distract my thoughts. But for the time—a day, I suppose—I was inconsolable. What was this hideous thing, death? Great waves of emotion rolled over me. My heart felt tight. Life was frightening. Why did things like that happen? What had poor little Dicky done to deserve that fate? I did not enjoy my nightly sponge cake and glass of milk . . . Oh, oh, oh—I sobbed myself to sleep.

From an early age I enjoyed talking about causes which I had at heart, and I shared the Irishman's love of an argument. I wanted to convert others to my point of view. My first lessons in public speaking began when I was nine. We had a very portly cook, by name Mrs. Seeley, whose chief characteristics were an unquenchable thirst for "Guinness," a partiality for a nap after lunch, and an apparent fondness for having Holy Writ read aloud to her. Whether the last named was merely assumed for reasons of tact I cannot say, forty years after. Anyhow, before I went to my private

school, and subsequently during the holidays, I considered it my duty to conduct a service immediately after lunch in the kitchen every Sunday afternoon. The kitchen table was cleared for me. On one end of the table I stood a kitchen chair as reading desk, and on it I placed my large red Bible. For pulpit I took another chair, the seat of which did not reach up to the surface of the table. For surplice I donned a large bath towel. Everything was conducted with decorum. My congregation consisted of Mrs. Seeley and our butler, who had grey mutton-chop side whiskers. I read a Psalm, a lesson, and from the latter chose the text for my sermon which lasted ten minutes.

Our cook, with her podgy hands clasped in her lap, her eyes closed, never stirred during the whole service. Was the droning of my voice, the after effects of the Guinness, or a genuine desire to concentrate on my exposition of the Scriptures, responsible for her immobility? I have never known.



CHAPTER II

AT A PRIVATE SCHOOL—SUMMER FIELDS

IN January, 1893, I was sent to Summer Fields, the private school near Oxford, famed for its teaching. My first letter from school was not very informative. "My dear Mama, There is a boy called Trench in the room I sleep in and a boy called Lee. I went to church to-day. Dr. Williams* is very nice. I wish I was home. I do not no when I will be home. I am in the bottom class. I am learning French. I have done all my Latin declensions now. Much love to you mother dear, your loving son Evelyn Wrench." A fortnight after my arrival, Dr. Williams, who no doubt knew how to say things which would console parents for the absence of their youthful paragon, wrote home: "You will be pleased to hear that Evelyn is settling down wonderfully well and is dropping into the ways of the place very quickly. He was delighted, on his arrival, to find himself in the same bedroom with two Irish boys who greeted him warmly as a compatriot. This got him over the initial difficulty and now he feels quite at home. He is placed in the lowest division with three other small boys who will work excellently with him. His *beaux yeux* have made many friends already! I am sure he will do."

The fact that I possessed a very good collection of stamps brought me kudos. I had come plentifully provided with duplicates. I gave "swops" to friends, asking them "to be kind to me." A large boy, a keen stamp collector, heard of these transactions. The opportunity was too good to be missed. He came to me and said "I won't bully you if you give me some good stamps." He was very big and fat, altogether rather an alarming chap. I had better keep in with him. I meekly passed over to him some of my best swops. A week later, like *Oliver Twist*, he asked for more, and got them. He must have added considerably to his

* The headmaster.

collection that term. In reality, he was a very nice fellow and I am sure would not have touched me. But an apprehensive "new kid" who craved friendship was fair game.

I regretfully have to admit that, during my career as a philatelist, my desire for a choice specimen overcame my sense of right and wrong, and I committed theft. I had been coveting for long one particular Zululand stamp. I was at a stamp dealer's, the assistant turned his back for for an instant, as quick as lightning I seized my booty, at the same time buying and paying for a number of other stamps. For years, every time I paged through my album, Queen Victoria's head on that red Zululand stamp pricked my awakening conscience. Finally I sent an anonymous postal order to the dealer for double the amount. I have always thought that people should make allowances for stamp collectors; they are subjected to temptations unknown to ordinary mortals!—not that I make any excuse for my misdeed.

By the end of February, I was settling down. I was making friends. School did not seem so frightening a place. There were happy moments. "T. told the boys in the room I sleep in and I a story called *King Solomon's Mines* by the same man that wrote *Allan Quatermain*. One of the boys puts a towel round himself when no one's about and dances all over the 'dor'* and pretends he is Gagoul the Witch." The summer term was much nicer than either the winter or Easter terms. There was bathing in the peaceful reaches of the river, where I was taught to swim. When the fruit season arrived, on Saturdays we used to have tea out of doors on the lawn, and every boy had his own little basket of cherries or strawberries. There was the whole new exciting world of butterfly and moth collecting. Armed with a butterfly net and with pockets bulging with paraphernalia, bought at Watkins and Doncaster, including killing bottle and chip boxes for caterpillars, it was fun on a June evening going off on the chase. When we got back, the victims had to be carefully mounted on thin white cork boards before they were transferred to more permanent quarters.

* Dormitory.

In my second term, for Latin I was in "Sallie's" class. Sallie was an efficient imparter of the mysteries of Latin Grammar to small boys. She had a deep voice, high coloured cheeks and big circles round her eyes. She wore a clinging dark blue dress with a close fitting collar, like a policeman's. Sallie could be rather alarming, especially if one was naughty. If the small boys were too exasperating, Sallie possessed the secret of bringing them back to their senses. She had a very long red pencil, about three times as long as an ordinary pencil. The culprit was bidden to hold out his knuckles, and he then and there received the number of raps commensurate with his crime. I liked Sallie, though I held her and her pencil in awe. Letters to parents were supervised by our teacher. I fear that some of the compliments about our instructors were written with the object of currying favour. In a letter home I wrote: "Sallie says that I am a very good boy and working very well. Sallie is always very kind to the boys that work hard. She gave me some sweets on Saturday, if I continue to do well I shall be in her form altogether. I shall try to be top in Latin this week. I was top in English yesterday. I am getting on well with my drawing. The sums I am doing are Reduction in weights and mesuars." Another letter of this period states: "I am getting on very well with my arithmect. I bouth a butter flie net for 1/- . . . Do you think the Home Rule bill will pass? . . . I have just seen a boy being caned and his name is—I rather not tell you his name—."

A very alarming institution at Summer Fields was the "Black Book." This was an exercise book with specially ruled lines. If any boy misbehaved himself, the master would send to the headmaster's desk for the "Black Book" and enter the name of the culprit, the date, his misdemeanour and initial it, returning the dreaded volume to the headmaster. On Saturday afternoons, in the top class room, the twenty or so culprits whose names had been entered in the book assembled before the headmaster. The headmaster studied the list of crimes and meted out appropriate punishment, probably so many lines by heart. If the name of the boy appeared three times in the Black Book in any week,

he was caned on that part of his anatomy provided by nature for the purpose. Occasionally, if you were lucky, you could catch a glimpse of the solemn procession to the place of execution—the headmaster's study—but you had to be on the *qui vive* because you might be caught by another master in the act of spying on sights not meant for small schoolboys' eyes. The way to the study was along a dark passage. First came the headmaster, in his clerical frock coat, with his serious clean-shaven face; behind him walked the culprit. The baize door swung to—the goddess of Justice was being propitiated on the fateful mat.

In looking through old records, I have come across a page of the Black Book, which I once enclosed in a letter home. How it came into my possession I do not remember. "I send you a page of the Black Book," I wrote, "which a very daring boy called — tore out." There are twenty names on the page before me. In the "offence" column appear the following list of sins: "Talking in silence time," "disorderly going up to meals," "interfering," "Latin lesson disgracefully prepared," "kicking another boy," "abominable inattention at Latin," and "stopping another boy from work." I am glad to say I never got into the Black Book more than twice in any week.

A letter home written at this period runs: "I am very glad that father has shot five deer, do you think he will shoot a bear?"* "I hope you are quite well, I am well. I was 2nd in Latin last week and top of my French class. Please send me some stamps to swop . . . I am writing a story book called *A voyage to Australia or in the Eastern Hemeshire*. I would be very glad if you would send me some money, as I am very short."

On November 12th, I wrote to my mother and sister in French. A week later I report "Mr. Evans, the French master, is going to give me an apple for being top of my French class." "*Ma chère mère et soeur*," I wrote, "*j'espère que vous êtes tout à fait bien, je me porte très bien. J'ai 42 marques la semaine dernière pour Latin. Nous somme juste revenus d'une promenade, j'ai reçu les timbres hier dans le matin. Beaucoup des garçons sont sortis à Oxford aujour*

* My father was in Hungary.

dui. Une garçon qui s'appelle Rooke m'aide à écrire cette lettre il a été dans le sud de France une huitaine de fois. La tournoi de draughts est près que fini. Très sincèrement je reste votre bien aimé fils et frère, Evelyn Wrench."

Sherlock Holmes was a prime favourite. On Sunday evenings, before we went to bed, Dr. Williams, in his well-modulated voice, used to read us the last instalment of our hero's adventures. On getting back to school one term, "Dr. Williams said that Conan Doyle was staying at the place at which he was staying and that he read to them one of his books, and said he asked him if Sherlock Holmes was coming again to life, but (C. D.) said he was not, and that he had got quite sick of writing a lot of stories about him."

The first time my correspondence ever includes a reference to America, a country with which I had so many ties in after life, was in March, 1895. "An american lecturer came here on Friday and instead of afternoon school we listened to him it was very good he told us all about america."

During the years at my private school I lived for the holidays. No sooner had I arrived back at school than I kept an account of the number of days till the date for breaking up. It was a joyous occasion when our trunks and play-boxes were dragged out of their resting place a couple of days before the end of term. I loved the actual journey home. New types of railway engines and new types of corridor-carriages to study and talks with friends among the railway officials. I knew several of the guards. "Went in the van with my old friend the guard, I had tea with him and we eat bananas and cake," I recorded.

The most exciting journey home I ever had was at the end of the winter term, 1894. On the night of December 20-21, I had got on board the old mail paddle-steamer *Munster* at Holyhead at 2.35 in the night. I went on to the top deck and stood as near the captain's bridge as was permissible. The night was pitch black; we could only have been going fifteen minutes when I suddenly saw a red light in the sky, there was a terrific crash, smoke began coming out of unexpected places, there were cries and we suddenly began to heel over. It was a collision. An unknown steamer had crashed into us. The paddle-box was

broken, the lavatory room bulged in, water was pouring into the stokehole, and the *Munster* made a great list to starboard. For a time everything was confusion. It was mysterious standing in the dark, with clouds of steam, on a deck sloping like the side of a house. By now our list must have been about forty degrees. The captain and crew reassured the passengers "There was no danger"—but wasn't there? We had turned over on one side, with one paddle-wheel out of the water, why shouldn't we go on turning? I was so excited about everything that was happening I had no time for fear. A grown-up woman standing close to me threw her arms round a big man with a moustache and cried out—"Oh, Charlie darling, save me." Rockets were sent up—there was no wireless then—and in a few hours we were tugged back to Holyhead. Fortunately the sea was smooth. The boats had been stripped and made ready for launching, as the starboard deck was level with the water. My family spent several anxious hours till they received the news that we were all safe. Twelve hours late we finally arrived at Kingstown. Huge crowds met the boat. It was fun being a celebrity. I was interviewed for the first time and enjoyed seeing my statement in print.

From an early age I kept a diary. My first is for the year 1894, and with one or two breaks I have kept one ever since. My mother kept most of my letters to her, so that in dipping into the past to write of my schooldays I have had a great wealth of material. It has been a curious experience, suddenly plunging back forty years and finding oneself a small boy again. Many long-forgotten facts and feelings came back to me. I do not know whether all small boys take such an interest in their food as I appear to have done. Entries about food are very frequent, I regret to say. On New Year's Day of my earliest extant diary I read: "I was walking about the house at six. Read and had a cake . . . After breakfast wrot my story. At about 12.0 went into the kiction and cut sume armons up, had dinner and after it I made nice cakes they were very good. I am going to get a suit of clowths with long trousers." I am sorry to find this entry in my diary when I was eleven: "I went out and played about in the snow and after a little time I went with

B (my brother) to catch birds. We caught six." I fear they were caught with birdlime. I hope this was the only time I ever indulged in so horrible a pastime.

The chief event of the Christmas holidays in January, 1894, was learning to ride a bicycle. My father gave me a lovely machine. "It is very nice. At $\frac{1}{4}$ to 12 I got Bill (our stable boy) to help me to ride. At 1.0 I was able to go about 4 yards by myself." Bicycling played a great part in our lives in those days. The latest Raleigh, Sunbeam, Elswick or Singer catalogue was studied as carefully as the modern motor list. Every two or three years there was the joy of owning a gorgeous new machine, painted chocolate and gold or green and black, with all the latest gadgets.

No account of my boyhood would be complete without a reference to our butler, John Corbett, who after thirty-nine years' service is still with us. He played a great part in my youth. He was one of my greatest friends. He was my confidant all through my growing years, and every escapade was related to his sympathetic ears. We used to have great rags. He had been a pugilist of no mean order when he lived in America. I think he ought to have taken up boxing as a profession. He had tremendously powerful, hairy arms—his biceps were objects of wonder to my brother and me. If I teased him beyond endurance, he would seize me and carry me off struggling.

One day I determined to get even with him. I have forgotten the cause of my wrath. I awaited my opportunity. Corbett was dressing for dinner after the day's work and was putting on a nice clean shirt. His dressing table was by a wide-open window in the semi-basement; from our avenue drive one could look down into his room. Armed with a syringe full of water I crept past the ivy-grown railings that hid me from view. In a flash I stood up and emptied its contents on to Corbett's shirt. I rushed for sanctuary to the billiard room where my mother was. But I could not remain still for long. With beating heart I tried to go through the garden. But Corbett was lying in wait. He pounced on me and carried me struggling to the large water tank in the stable yard. Clothes and all he plunged me in three times, in vain I kicked, bit and

struggled. Next day we were the best of friends, but never again did I goad "James" beyond endurance. Corbett has a heart of gold and has played a large part in our family's affairs. He is a philosopher with a wonderful fund of Irish wit. When my father died seven years ago at Hythe, it was Corbett who ministered to him during his last days.

My mother planned a delightful journey through Central Europe in the Summer holidays of 1895. It was my initiation as a globe-trotter. We crossed from Harwich on the s.s. *Cambridge* to Antwerp and I see from an old diary that she had "2 funnels yellow and black, 6 boats and 35 hands." As we put alongside the quay, to my joy there was a cargo steamer at anchor flying the Red Ensign. I amused my mother and sister by exclaiming, "How wonderful it is to see the British flag again"—it was just ten hours since I had left my native shores! My first impression of the Continent of Europe—I was twelve—was of the cleanliness of Holland. "All the houses look clean at Flushing which I cannot say of the Emerald Isle," I wrote, and later in the day when I was taken to the Antwerp zoo I recorded that, "I rode on an elephant—I saw some animals which I had never seen before such as, Garaffs, hypotomi, zebra and Rhynosceris."

At Antwerp I was first introduced to hotel table d'hôte dinners, when all the guests used to sit at a long table—dinner at separate tables for en pension tourists was then unknown. At my first meal I noted: "There was at table d'hôte two American ladies, one had her hair in a bun at the back and it stuck up on the top of her head and a nice old man with two daughters, one of them was *very* pretty." My second day on the Continent was passed at Rotterdam, where "The Park is a large space covered with trees and paths and a band plays and there are lots of refreshment places. I eat five ices, each of them cost $\frac{1}{2}$ d." I wrote in my diary. I regret to say I discontinued keeping my diary on this trip two days later, so I do not know what was the record number of ices consumed at one sitting.

The goal of our journey was the Austrian Salzkammergut, whither my father used to go for chamois shooting, lent him by Prince Kinsky. I wonder if Grundlsee is as unspoilt as

it was thirty-nine years ago. In 1895 it was an earthly paradise. Five miles from a railway station, near a lake amid the mountains were a few wooden Tyrolean peasants' houses and a couple of wooden hotels. Everyone, except the waiter in our Gasthaus, wore Tyrolean dress, an example soon followed by us children. My brother and I were very proud of our chamois-leather shorts and green embroidered braces and our green hats with chamois beard (Gemsensbart).

It was a very proud small boy who was told by his father that the following day he might come on a three days' chamois hunt in the mountains, especially as this was an adventure that his mother and sister could not share. The only guns were my father and brother, and our companions were three delightful huntsmen (Jaeger) and the beaters—all of course in Tyrolean dress. I shall never forget the thrill of first seeing a mother chamois and her little kid springing from rock to rock, but even at that early date, I remember being glad that they were immune. My father was a very fine shot and sitting in the butt beside him I felt I would burst with agitation as we watched a fine buck climbing up the mountain side through a clearing in the forest. My father's rifle rang out and the poor chamois rolled over dead. Chamois shooting conjures up before my mind memories of wonderful days in the mountains, of tired limbs, of picnic lunches, of bilberries, of appetites known only to mountaineers and of nights spent in huntsmen's log huts far from human habitation.

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The method of teaching at Summer Fields was extremely efficient. In my three and a half years there I learnt more than in any similar period of my life. If I did not take a higher place when I went to Eton, it was not Dr. Williams' fault. I was always delicate. Ill-health dogged my footsteps. I caught the recently discovered complaint, influenza, whenever there was an epidemic.

In the Christmas holidays I distinguished myself by swallowing a penny. I had been to an entertainment where I had seen a conjuror produce things from his mouth. While the family was at breakfast and my mother was

reading her letters and my father was engrossed in the *Irish Times*, I was "mosquitoing" about, putting a couple of pennies in my mouth and subsequently taking them out. One, alas, slipped down my throat. My family rushed to the rescue. I was shaken head downwards, my back was slapped, I was made to drink a nauseating draught of mustard and salt water. But to no avail, the penny was firmly wedged in my throat. Our doctor was summoned, long forceps were tried, but they only clinked on the flat surface of the penny, it was not possible to catch the edge. There was nothing for it but to push it down into my stomach by means of a rubber tube with a sponge on the end. For thirteen days there was the monotonous entry in my diary "no penny." My family was getting alarmed. The possibility of utilising the recently discovered X-rays was considered. Was the penny making progress on the long journey round the mysterious tubes and things of which my inside was composed? I studied the coloured reproduction of the male anatomy in my mother's medical directory. The doctor remained confident and insisted on a diet of potatoes, porridge and spinach and as much starch as possible. Then came the entry "at 3.30 the penny came." There was rejoicing in the family. All was well that ended well. I became a local celebrity. My mother had the penny put into the cabinet of family curios, but what was much more important from my standpoint, I had an extra two weeks' holiday to get over my indisposition. What fun it was being able to eat what you liked again. Two days later my diary records "Having a great time. We cycled a good lot. I eat nearly a whole bottle of preserved peaches"—it was almost worth all the discomfort for orgies of peaches like that. Our cook knew my partiality for a special brand and always kept supplies available.

No sooner had I got back for my final term than I got a bad attack of influenza which developed into inflammation of the lungs. Dr. and Mrs. Williams nursed me just as if I had been one of their own children. I began to mend, the crisis was past. "I have to drink a small bottle of champagne every day (at least it is not so very small). Of course I have

it at different times of the day. I have just eaten two oranges to-day which I find make another man of me, and so to-day the other man got a chance . . . through the window I saw two tandem cycles pass here, they were both ridden by men and were scorching along . . . *Rob Roy* is awfully good and I am now engrossed in *Quentin Durward* by Sir Walter Scott, it is one of the best books I have ever read. I have also read *St. George for England* by my old favourite, G. A. Henty" (*letter home*).

By the beginning of June Dr. Williams wrote to my mother, "We are delighted to say that the little man is all right. He had a 'careful' walk with the nurse yesterday and seemed the better for it. By Saturday he should be fit for travelling . . . I am so distressed about the work, but too thankful that the child seems all right again to think over much about that just now." A few days later my mother and sister came and fetched me. "They told me how ill Evelyn had looked," my mother wrote, "but I was not prepared for the very delicate look he had. So white and emaciated and then with huge eyes and very delicate looking hands." I went to convalesce at Weston-super-Mare. When I went away the plan was that I was to return to Summer Fields for the last five or six weeks of the term. But I was now hopelessly behind in my Latin, always my weak spot, and I persuaded my parents to let me remain in Ireland and have a tutor. Such is my belief in Dr. Williams' methods that I am sure, had I gone back, he would somehow or other have managed to help me to catch up the lost months. But I pleaded with my parents and they decided that I must stay at home by the sea and get really strong. One of the drawbacks of not going back to Summer Fields was that I missed the special talks Dr. Williams used to give each boy, during his last term, on the temptations of a public school.

Unfortunately my father never discussed intimate things like the mystery of sex and the problems of puberty with his sons, and so I went to my public school ill-equipped for the struggle. I knew a good deal about the facts of life from my long experience with animals on my father's farms, but I did not realise all the pitfalls that await a little boy.

I do not want to give the impression that I am blaming my father—no son could have had a more devoted parent. My father's one thought was always of our welfare. But there were some subjects taboo. It was not the fashion in those days to speak plainly to children. One of the first times that I remember thinking that there was a whole world about which I knew nothing was during a railway journey from Dublin to Cork. We were on our way to join the steamer *Granuaile* for a summer cruise. We were going to visit local horse-shows arranged by the Congested Districts Board. Colonel St. Quentin, a well-known Irish sportsman, was with us. I can see that saloon carriage, specially reserved for my father's party, with all the luggage strewn about. I had been studying a horse-show catalogue. "What is a gelding, Fardie," I said, pronouncing the word as if it were spelt to rhyme with fielding. The assembly burst out laughing. Colonel St. Quentin nearly exploded. I thought he would get apoplexy. Evidently I had said something very funny. I felt rather important. Then I felt shy and thought I had better not refer to the subject any more. But I determined to find out when the chance came, as I did.

CHAPTER III

ETON IN 1896

AFTER leaving Summer Fields I spent fourteen weeks at home. A tutor helped me partially to regain the ground lost through repeated absence from school. I was taken by my parents to spend the last week-end of the holidays before going to Eton with the late Sir Walter Gilbey at Elsenham Hall in Essex. Sir Walter was a great sportsman and dressed in the fashion of our grandfathers. He wore a snuff-coloured tail coat and trousers, frilled shirt, fob and gold seal, and, I think, canary waistcoat. He wore tight-fitting trousers, fashioned to the shape of his leg and pulled over his Wellington boots. Sir Walter had wonderful horses and drove in a carriage and four, with postillions. I felt very envious. Being a millionaire evidently gave one special rights. Sir Walter was very kind to me and took me to see the lovely fields of lavender he was cultivating. He gave me good advice about working hard and making my way in life as he had done.

On September 16th, my parents deposited me at Mr. C. H. Allcock's house at Eton. My Eton "trousseau" was complete. My mother had adopted all the suggestions contained on the printed slip "articles necessary for a new boy," from an Eton jacket, *without* a peak at the back, and top hat, down to blue scarf and bath mat. "I am enjoying myself very much indeed, I am quite happy," I wrote in my first letter home. "I have taken Upper Lower IV, it is two forms from the bottom. I have made a good many nice friends and have met a lot of old Summer Fields fellows. On Friday I went up to the Castle, we went all through the state rooms. I am reading rather a good book called *The Innocents Abroad*, by Mark Twain. My Fag master's name is Walker but I do not have to fag until the 30th of this month . . . I go in every day and get my hat ironed at Devereux's . . . Every day we have breakfast at 8.30, Chapel—9.25, Luncheon—2.0, tea—6.0, supper—9.0,

Prayers—9.30 to 9.40, Bed—10.0. Mr. Allcock has been very nice indeed to me, he comes and sees me every evening at 10.0. Yesterday I passed in Swimming at Cuckoo Weir."

My classical tutor was the Reverend Lionel Ford.* My Division Master was Mr. A. B. Ramsay.† Eton was a very wonderful place; I fell under its spell straight away. There was no bullying, it was much less frightening than a private school. The big boys seemed very kind. I was anxious to make friends. I was just getting into the swing of things when I had a piece of bad luck. I was playing one of my first games of Eton football, in the field close to Lower Chapel, when I was charged by a fellow on the other side and sent flying into an oak paling. My elbow was badly damaged and my father was wired for.

The following day he took me to London to see Wharton Hood, the famous bone specialist. My arm, in a sling, was treble its usual size, almost like a blue, yellow and black pumpkin. "The doctor said that the kind of elbow accident E. has had was far more painful than breaking his arm" (my father's letter to my mother). Wharton Hood was hopeful and prescribed special massage. In three months it was more or less all right, but to this day it is not quite the same as my right arm. In medical circles Wharton Hood was regarded as a quack, but I owe the use of my arm to him. "Evelyn Wood‡ says all the doctors are against Wharton Hood, but there is simply no one to hold a candle to him and he has literally cured thousands where the old-fashioned remedies have failed," my father wrote to my mother.

Daily massage meant staying in London, and my godfather kindly said he would be delighted to have me. I spent two happy weeks with Sir Evelyn and his family. My special favourites were his daughter, Ella, and his son, Arthur, who had just left Sandhurst. Till his death my godfather and I were the best of friends. I greatly admired him. I have spent many hours listening to yarns about his early life in the navy, for Sir Evelyn started his career as a midshipman in the Crimean War, and about his sub-

* Subsequently headmaster of Repton and Harrow and Dean of York.

† Subsequently Lower Master, and since 1925, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge.

‡ Field Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, my godfather.

sequent adventures in the army in India, Africa, and Egypt. I greatly appreciated the fact that he treated me as an equal and, even when I was a boy, never talked down to me. "I got my luggage and drove in a hansom here (23, Devonshire Place)," I wrote to my mother. "They all have taken tremendous care of me . . . There is a nice lady staying here. She lives in India, she has had a bad fall from a horse out in India about a year ago when she broke four ribs, 1 collar bone, her nose, her hip, dislocated her shoulder, cut her lip and damaged her eye, and now she is as well as ever. Dr. Hood sent her to his 'gym' for 5 weeks. There is a horrible fox terrier here who growls at everybody and has bitten 30 or 40 people, but they console me by telling me his teeth are so old they cannot hurt."

This was the first occasion on which I had ever stayed in a Roman Catholic household. My godfather belonged to the Church of England, but the late Lady Wood was a Roman and the children had been brought up in their mother's faith. I was surprised to find that "R.C.'s," at close quarters were more or less the same as the rest of us. My uncle* had become a convert to Rome at Oxford and the subject of Roman Catholicism was always a painful one at home.

The Westminster Aquarium (on the site of the present Central Hall), always occupied a special niche in my affections. It was a kind of permanent Barnum and Bailey Show. "Yesterday after lunch, Arthur Wood and I took a hansom and drove to the Aquarium," I wrote home. "First of all we saw a tattooed lady and then went and saw some motor cycles and then saw some marvellous acrobats etc. also some living pictures, it was splendid. Then we saw some awfully nice lions in a cage, who were beaten with iron sticks from outside to bate them. And then a Countess of X, a French woman, who wore a black thing over her eyes, so as not to show herself, went into the cage with only an iron stick and a shield. The lions were not tame like they *generally are* but were quite fierce, they tried to hit her down but she did not get hurt, but very nearly did because when she went out of the cage she made a rush for the door and all the lions after her but she just managed to slam the door

* Sir Henry Bellingham.

after her. We feel sure that she will be killed before long."

Five weeks after my accident I was back at Eton picking up threads. It was rather mortifying being treated as a new boy by the fellows who had come to Eton with me in September. I did the usual work during the remainder of the half, but I was not allowed to play games on account of my arm, so I used to spend the afternoon at the school workshop where I made, with the help of the school carpenter, a revolving bookcase for my mother and a rather ambitious boat for myself, which I fear never put to sea.

In an early letter to my father I find a passing reference to the special problems which confront a small boy, but after this I never again mentioned this subject in letters home. I was reticent with my parents. There was the hard lesson to learn of saying "no." To be able to say "no," even if it might lead to personal unpopularity with those with whom you wished to stand well, meant a long fight in which there were many victories, but, alas, a few defeats. I became very fond of my tutor, Lionel Ford, and there existed an unclouded friendship between us, though I fear he only knew an idealised me, the me I wanted to be. "Tell father," I wrote to my mother, "I like Ford *awfully*, he has been exceedingly nice to me, in fact could not have been nicer; last Sunday evening he had me in and told me all the temptations and gave me a very nice jaw."

Ten days after my return I wrote home "I am flourishing and am getting into the ways of the place again. I do *love* Eton . . . I am not allowed to do any heavy fagging, but just make tea, toast and light fires for my fag-master, Walker. Tell B. (my brother) at first I could not make out what the fire-lighters* were." Fagging was never very alarming. My most tiresome duty was emptying my fag-master's bath, or making him scrambled eggs just when I wanted to attend to my own affairs. Occasionally I was sent "down town" to carry out commissions at his tailor's or hosier's.

I enjoyed the greater freedom of a public school. You

* Made of some easily inflammable composition which made the lighting of fires comparatively easy.

were much more your own master. A week later my letter states: "I am getting on A.I. Everybody in this house is awfully nice to me I generally have about 10 fellows in my room, all ragging about and I have a box of chocolates out and it is fairly well cleared out in an hour or so. My room is getting awfully nice all the walls are covered with pictures and I have some fans. My curtains are up and look very nice . . . I bought 2 dormice with your 5/-. I do *love* Eton, so different to a private school, here you are so free and you are only put on to translate about once a month it is awfull fun . . . I have not been bullied once this half." There was a characteristic postscript to my letter, "A cake or so or a tongue would do me no harm." Evidently my too-kind parents sent the cake, but I fear I looked a gift horse in the mouth: "Thanks for the cake; but the next you send, could it be iced and sponge, as I do not care much for plum and ginger"—and, as an afterthought—"Though it was very good."

I am afraid my sympathy for the afflicted was not so great as it should have been. I wrote home with evident relish, "You will be glad to hear that there is a swishing* here nearly every day now, sometimes the fellows are not able to sit down comfortably for a few days." Swishing at Eton was a very grim business, none of the "friendly" atmosphere of a private school, where the implement of correction was a flexible and comparatively harmless cane. The birch, made up of countless twigs, was an alarming weapon and made the stoutest hearts quake. It was only administered by the "Head," or in the case of lower boys, by the Lower Master. The victim would be summoned by a preposter to appear "after twelve," and two assistant executioners were present to "hold down" the culprit. I only once acted as a holder-down. No force was required. The delinquent meekly placed himself on the block, ready for the blow to fall. My feelings, as I witnessed the Lower Master†—nicknamed the "Flea"—deftly wave the birch through the air, were confused: sorrow for the victim, admiration for the Flea's dexterity, wondering just how much it hurt—curiosity to see just how the deed was done and whether

* Birching.

† E. C. Austen-Leigh.

the culprit would cry, a feeling of thankfulness that I was not kneeling on the block and finally the hope that I never would. I am happy to say I never did.

My Etonian "patriotism" was growing. Eton understood how to turn ordinary little Britons into Etonians first. England for me became a country inhabited by Etonians and their families and the unfortunate remainder of the population. I signed a letter home "I am your very loving son Evelyn Wrench, belonging to the greatest and best of schools. *Floreat Etona.*" Poor Harrovians, how I pitied them! How terrible to have dark blue for your colour. I fear I was rather a snob. I enjoyed knowing a Prince. I was impressed by the fact that among my friends were Indian Maharajahs and many "Lords."

Eton seemed very near the centre of things. Did not Queen Victoria live in sight of my room at M'tutor's? Did she not have a special affection for Etonians? The first time I saw the Queen I wrote: "Do you know that the queen drives past here nearly every day in a four horse carriage, all greys and with two outriders. The queen does not have postillions but a coachman sits on the box and drives; and beside him sits a scotchman with a cap with ribbons." A year later seeing the Queen was no novelty. "Yesterday I saw the Queen drive past. I got an awfully good view of the old dame, she looked very well and bowed to me." The last time I refer to the Queen's drives through Eton was in November 1896. "I saw the Queen to-day in a closed carriage for the first time I have ever seen her in one. She was wearing specs. She passes every day." My final letter to my mother before the Christmas holidays ended up "The final Lower Boy match for the Cup was won by Allcocks. It is sad to think that if it hadn't been for my arm I would have played on the winning side. Please tell father that, of course, it is awfully good of him to send me to Eton as it is very expensive. There is no school like it. *Floreat Etona.* P.S. Please except any good dances for me in the holidays."

My second year at Eton was increasingly happy. The Easter half was great fun. I was able to play fives, which I preferred to football, and through the good offices of an old Etonian friend I was allowed to go out with the Beagles. I am afraid that at this stage in my career my humane sentiments were dormant—it was not till I came under Ruskin's influence, through his books, a dozen years later, that my whole attitude to sport became changed. At Eton I had apparently no scruples about the ethics of hunting the hare—"The beagles are tremendous fun," I wrote, "I have gone out with them twice last week and I am quite able to keep up; I went out on Tuesday when we went about 7½ miles altogether, and yesterday when we went about 13½. We did not kill but very nearly did and we rose 4 hares."

The holiday task at Easter was one of my favourite books, Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. I was delighted. I read and re-read it. I steeped myself in the atmosphere of England in the reign of Richard. Gurth, Friar Tuck, Wamba, Athelstane and Ubriaca became living human beings to me. How marvellous to be a knight! "Man dies but once, but glory liveth." *Ivanhoe* was much more to my liking than *The Lays of Ancient Rome*, a previous holiday task. I wished they would always give us books like *Ivanhoe*. For the one and only time I won a holiday task prize. Six months later I distinguished myself by winning another prize. I think these two were the only prizes I won at Eton.

How I learned of my success is told in this letter to my parents: "I got rather a shock last Friday during afternoon school. A fellow who is up to the Flea (Austen-Leigh), came into our division with the following notice 'The Lower Master wishes to see Wrench after 6'. My heart thumped against my braces. I thought I was at least going to be swished, though I did not know for which of my misdeeds. My mouth got all dry, I could not pay attention to my work. I tried not to let anyone see what I was feeling. When 6 came I went to the Flea's room. He looked over the top of his glasses and in his nasal voice and puffing out his cheeks, as he always does, he said, 'Well Wrench, you have got the History Prize for last half in form IV.' I was

surprised and then he told me that I had got full marks $\frac{90}{100}$. The prize book is Mahan's *Life of Nelson*."

The summer half at Eton was a succession of delights. Three half-holidays a week, long afternoons on the river, as I was a wet-bob, occasional whole holidays, Henley Regatta, the Eton and Winchester Match and finally the Eton and Harrow at Lords. Few boys can have had a happier time than wet-bobs at Eton. It was wonderful to have your own boat. "My whiff is a very nice one," I wrote home, "I went out in it for the first time on Thursday afternoon, after going about 200 yards I swamped and swam to the shore, no damage being done. Wet bobbing is far nicer than dry bobbing I am sure."

When staying with my godfather in London I had become imbued with the military spirit. I wanted to join the "dogshooters" (Volunteers). I asked my father if I might. My father, who hardly ever refused his sons' requests, said "yes." I was soon a member of the Band and was busy playing the triangle, or on occasions the cymbals. Why old Hammond, the Bandmaster, never discovered my musical deficiencies I do not understand to this day. I am sure I was never able to read the score, the chief thing was to give a loud bang on the cymbals at the right moment. When on the march, I used to help to carry the big drum. When I was tall enough I became a full-blown private and carried a rifle, and had intermittent visions, which never lasted long, of a military career. "Last Wednesday we had a field day at Camberley near Sandhurst; Eton, Harrow and Malvern on one side against the rest, we won easily, it was great fun charging up hills and firing at the enemy; I have joined the Corps now and have to do 40 drills of which I have done 15 so far, so when I come home I will know something about shooting as we have to do a great lot of firing. Next Monday is going to be a whole holiday on account of the appointment of three Etonians to distinguished posts, namely Lord Minto, as Governor-General of Canada, Lord Curzon as Viceroy of India and Welldon* as Bishop of Calcutta."

In the summer of 1897 the school was busy drilling for the

* The Rt. Rev. J. E. C. Welldon.

Jubilee celebrations. Half the school was dressed in white flannel coats and caps, the other half in blue flannel coats and caps. We carried torches and did endless drillings in the playing fields. The final display took place at Windsor Castle on the evening of June 25th. Here we carried out our carefully rehearsed serenadings. Rather inadequately my weekly letter home recorded our doings. "Our Jubilee torchlight procession came off with great success, and the Headmaster has just read to us two letters, one from the Queen and the other from the Empress Frederick, saying how pleased they were; I must say the Head took a lot of pains over it all. It was rather nice when the Queen came here, she drove through Eton with a lot of other Royalty and she also had some Colonial troops with her and a lot of Life Guards."

We sang with all our might "God Save the Queen," the Eton Jubilee Song, composed by A. C. Ainger for the occasion, A. C. Benson's "Queen Mother" and the Eton Boating Song:

Rugby may be more clever,
Harrow may make more row,
But we'll row together,
Steady from stroke to bow;

the "Carmen Etonense," "Rule Britannia," and finally "Salve Regina" in the presence of our Queen. No one in that throng sang more lustily or with greater conviction than I, the words:

Queen and Mother, mightiest, best,
True in love and strong in tears,
Throned within an Empire's breast,
Crowned and throned for three-score years,
Who shall praise thee? Who shall say
All that thrills his heart to-day.

An undreamt of era of splendour and expansion seemed to lie ahead of the British Empire. Why should we ever stop expanding? A patriotic Irish poet wrote "Before m' flag's furreld, says she, I'll own the wur-ruld, says she." We were the people of destiny. It was evidently our job to run the world, and in running it Eton was going to play a big part.

At the end of my second year I had good reports, though even friendly disposed masters could not wax enthusiastic over my classical knowledge. The Lower Master, in whose division I was in my third term, was distinctly restrained in his praise. He wrote "Well behaved and pleasant in manner. I think the boy tries, but his knowledge of Latin and Greek hardly warrants his place in trials last half. He got a holiday task prize and perhaps has some capacity for getting up history and kindred subjects." Hubert Brinton was the first master who succeeded in making the Greeks and Romans *live* to me. Brinton made me realise that the classics were about actual people who lived a couple of thousand years ago, and were not just endless accounts of immortal beings who talked with "winged words" in *Homer* and elsewhere. Brinton showed me photographs of the Acropolis at Athens and of the plains of Troy.

1898 started with the usual bout of ill-health. I had influenza and was sent to the Isle of Wight to recuperate. One afternoon my father and I were walking over the Downs near Freshwater. On the cliffs a young man was working near a hut. On his bench were instruments, he was surrounded by wires, there were high poles near by. Curious metallic sounds came from the hut and work bench. What was he doing? I asked my father if I might speak to him. In reply to my question the young man said: "I am sending messages through the ether to the mainland on the other side of the Solent"—the man was Marconi.

During my last year at Eton I frequently used gold embossed writing paper, which used to cost 1d. per sheet. But I was outdone by a friend whose stationery cost him 6d. a sheet. The Eton arms were specially embossed in four colours, gold, black, red and blue!

But life was not all beer and skittles. This was the time table of an ordinary week-day :

Get up	. 6.15.	Work	. 9.45 to 10.30.
Work	. 7 to 8.	Work	. 10.30 to 11.15.
Breakfast	. 8 to 8.30.	Work	. 11.15 to 12.
Work	. 8.30 to 9.15.	Play, etc.	. 12 to 2.
Chapel	. 9.25 to 9.45.	Luncheon	2 to 2.30.

Nothing .	2.30 to 2.45.	Work .	8.15 to 9.
*Work .	2.45 to 3.30	Supper .	9 to 9.15.
Nothing .	3.30 to 5.15.	Prayers .	9.30 to 9.40.
*Work .	5.15 to 6.	Bed .	10.
Nothing .	6 to 8.15.		

One of the chief excitements of the summer half in 1898 was the funeral of a famous old Etonian, W. E. Gladstone. To the Eton Volunteers fell the honour of lining the streets at the entrance to the Abbey. We felt very important. Like the passing of Queen Victoria a couple of years later. it signified the end of an era. "Last Saturday morning at $\frac{1}{4}$ past 8 we left Eton by special train for Waterloo, where we arrived at 20 past 9. We then drew up and marched to Westminster Abbey over Westminster Bridge and by the Houses of Parliament. When we got to the place outside Westminster Abbey there were tremendous crowds but a huge square was kept empty by the police numbering about 1800, into this we marched and drew up all round while the band drew up in a long line beside the West door of the Abbey through which the whole procession had to go. I was standing 2nd in the 1st row just beside the Abbey door about a yard off and had about the best place in the whole corps, I saw everybody perfectly splendidly, Prince of Wales, the Princess, the Duke and Duchess of York, all the Lords and Commons."

During Lords leave in the summer half of 1898 I had my first peep into the world of fashionable London Society. I was much impressed by the grandeur of my surroundings. I pictured myself as the future British Ambassador in Paris, always mixing with the "great." At that time I confused prominence in "Society" with greatness. Lady Warwick introduced me to Lord Salisbury's private secretary as "a coming diplomat." Everyone I met seemed to possess a great name, to be able to pull strings. If I could only work my way one day into this *milieu*, my ambition would get plenty of scope. We spent a hectic week-end. On the first day of my leave a letter records that "I went in 10 hansomes." Money flowed like water. I arrived at 10.30 at 85, Mount Street, to find Lord and Lady Warwick

* Left out on half-holiday.

breakfasting. They were both charming to me and I soon felt entirely at ease. "I like both of them very much," I wrote home. "Lord Warwick is very jolly and rags about. They both are very fond of each other and Lady Warwick is *very* pretty. She and I talked about politics. She rather bosses him about, though not very much. When Guy Brooke turned up we went to get our hair shampooed and to Purdy's to see about a new gun for him. We then drove to the Carlton Club to see the latest score at Lords (between Eton and Harrow). At 10 to 2.0 we drove to Willis' Rooms* off St. James's Street. You may have heard of them, all the smartest people go there. There is only room for about 30 people. We four had a marvellous luncheon which cost £4 18s. od.—I saw the bill. After lunch we drove to Lords. Then to Gunters for tea. After tea we drove to the Aquarium and from there to the Duke of Sutherland's house,† they are relations of Guy's. It certainly is a very fine house. After dressing we went to dine with Lord Curzon and after dinner a large party of us went to the Naval Exhibition. We were licked at Lords by 9 wickets, but Harrow won the toss and had all the luck. Had dinner and went back to Eton. I got several tips." Eton seemed rather humdrum after the great world, but there were only three weeks to the holidays. Besides there was the joy of thinking about an exciting trip to Germany and Poland of which my father told me.

* Then *the* fashionable restaurant.

† Now the London Museum.

CHAPTER IV

WIDENING HORIZONS

MY appetite for foreign travel was purposely developed by my mother, who believed in its educational value for growing minds. To her I owe a great debt. At the age of 85 she still takes a keen interest in world affairs. She persuaded my father to let my sister and me have the fun of planning our journeys. I was allowed to do the negotiations with Cook's and to me were entrusted the money-bags. Could a boy of 15 or 16 have had a more delightful job than piloting his family round remote parts of Europe and the Near East? Before we went off on our travels my mother would herself select books bearing on our journeys for us to read. We obtained novels about the countries through which we travelled—not a very easy task, for on many occasions we were in districts rarely visited by our fellow-countrymen.

During the summer holidays in 1898 we went to those parts of Eastern Germany and Western Russia which are now Poland. My father was anxious to study the methods the German Government was employing through its *Ansiedelung's* Commission to Germanise its Polish territories. It was my first experience in Europe of the Minorities problem. Germany's desire for racial purity is no new thing, and thirty-five years ago I visited many districts, where under Government supervision families of Teutonic stock were being transplanted from Westphalia and Western Germany and being settled in Polish districts. The object of the German Government was two-fold. To Germanise the Polish districts, adjoining Russia, and to set up a higher standard of husbandry.

Germany in 1898 was a stimulating country. To my youthful eyes it seemed the best-run country I had ever visited. Everything was spick and span. Even the dray-horses, fat and sleek, seemed tidier than ours. The station-masters in uniforms of royal blue and in scarlet military caps awed me.

I thought with pity of the frock-coated station-master in a badly brushed top hat at Euston. As for the station masters in Ireland, many German porters surpassed them in smartness.

How prosperous and plump the railway guards, also in blue, looked with their red-leather wallets suspended on a strap. I envied the shunters who had huntsmen's horns slung round their middles. The tidiness of the German railway stations was impressive. When I arrived at Friederichstrasse, Berlin, I compared in my mind the neat rows of waiting taximeter victorias with British four-wheelers and hansoms. It was my first introduction to the taximeter, then unknown in England. I noted with interest the fact in my diary.

Germany's love for uniforms and military display impressed me. I envied the officers with their caps at a jaunty angle, their eye-glasses, their clanking swords and spurs, their wonderful uniforms, pale blue and pink, dark blue and red, green and gold, their capes of pale grey with red trimmings worn with all the air of Henry Irving in a Shakespeare play. They were so well groomed. Their uniforms fitted so miraculously, their waist line must have been the envy of many a belle. I admired the Prussian Guards in their white trousers, who were constantly to be seen in the neighbourhood of the Unter den Linden.

Germany was a paradise for a boy with a partiality for cakes and ice creams. I was introduced to a new world of *Conditoreien* (cake shops). Here was a dream world of chocolate, coffee, pistache, nougat, orange, peach, cherry; each ice of colouring more subtle than its neighbour. How could I make up my mind on which path of delight to tread? There was one obvious solution—to go right through the list.

I had not seen many of our British slums in those days but I had seen enough to make me have an uncomfortable feeling that something was not right. I had been to the Eton Mission in Hackney Wick, I had seen the docks at Glasgow and Liverpool, and Dublin. I had become accustomed to seeing drunken women on public holidays. The men and women in the poorer districts in many of our

big cities were slovenly. In Germany and Holland I never saw a beggar or an untidy person. I wondered how it was done.

The open-air restaurants and beer-gardens of France and Germany seemed to me very delightful. Why was it at home if I wanted to eat out-of-doors there were so few places to go to? Of course at Rowlands at Eton, in the summer half I could have my fried fillet of sole with pink anchovy sauce and asparagus and a "strawberry mess" in the back garden near Barne's Pool Bridge when my finances permitted. But I never remembered eating out of doors in London or in any big town. Why was it? Here in Berlin and elsewhere we hardly ever ate indoors. And as to zoos, I had never seen anything like the Berlin Zoo and restaurant, where 10,000 people were eating under the trees, listening to the music. I was told that on Sundays 100 tons of iced beer was consumed.

Baedeker was a great luminary in my world. Three stars provided a standard of criticism from which there could be no appeal. How wearily I would wander round the picture Galleries of Europe! Every room, every starred masterpiece had to be ticked off; Baedeker was in command and his orders must be obeyed.

From Berlin we went to Eastern Germany, to provinces now part of Poland. I got my first view of Slavdom and what the Germans called the Slav Menace. Thirty-five years ago Eastern Germany was alive with troops. During the autumn manœuvres on dusty roads I saw thousands of strapping young men in serried ranks, with heavy knapsacks on their backs, and arms at the slope, tramping, tramping. Could these travel-stained officers belong to the same profession as the dandies I had seen in Berlin and elsewhere? The roads were very different from my ideas of what roads ought to be, just tracks, often a foot deep in sand, across endless plains.

It was more amusing making excursions by carriage to Polish villages, right off the beaten track, than going round endless galleries, churches and museums. There were visits to communal cow-sheds, to fields full of cackling geese, to herds of horses, to foreign looking villages with

strange wells—a bucket attached to a long wooden pole, which in its turn was attached to a vertical pole and was unlike anything I had ever seen.

On one occasion we were feasted by the local German manager of the "Germanization" Department (Ansiedelungs Commission) at his comfortable house near a lake. I rather envied the family tutor who was carrying on a flirtation with a plump *fräulein* when *die Frau Mama* (the mother of the family) was not looking. My diary records that "we sat down to lunch at three p.m. and had goose and all sorts . . . we had a most jolly time of it. I had nine glasses of wine." How I was so emancipated I do not know. My diary tells of no bad after-effects. Let us hope the wine was watered.

Sunday, August 28, 1898, was a red-letter day for we first crossed over the Russian frontier and since then dates my deep interest in everything Russian. "We were in great excitement," I wrote, "when I saw a Russian sentry which showed us that we were in Russia at last, or more properly Russian Poland. When we arrived at Alexandrowo, the frontier station, soldiers came round and collected our passports and father got rather excited, thinking that we would not get them back. However we met a porter who could speak English, having been in America for some time and he told us what to do."

Railway travelling in Russia was quite different from anything I had experienced. The engines looked like American engines and for fuel burned wood. The railway carriages were of the American type, the first-class painted blue, the second-class yellow and the third green. The seats were low and comfortable. Many of the officials wore top boots. Their uniforms were much more sombre than the German. There were a great many beards. The policemen had swords and pistols. We were followed by Secret Service police, it was all very exciting as we had constantly to show our passports. I had never been in a country before where passports were used. Railway journeys in Russia were very pleasant, the trains were slow and did not shake, there were no smuts and the gauge was wider than with us, so that one had plenty of room to move about.

The food was delicious—unlike anything I had ever tasted. Instead of a dull dining-car as at home, the trains would stop thirty minutes at the railway station. All the passengers would bundle out and a tempting meal would be waiting. Cabbage soup (Shchee) or Bortsch, calf's cutlets with meat patties and wonderful vegetables and sauces and compôte, washed down with boiling chai (Chinese tea with lemon) served in glasses. When there was no waiting train we could enjoy the excellence of Russian cooking in a more leisurely way, beginning with the Zakuska (*hors d'œuvre*)—I had never seen such dishes—a side table groaning with caviar and smoked salmon, sturgeon, sardines, anchovies, eggs, prawns, potato and mixed vegetable salads, olives, oysters, and I can't remember what else besides. I once counted thirty-nine different dishes. And before starting the Russians used to take a glass of liquid called Vodka, looking like water, which burnt your inside.

After our visit to Russia I began to read about the country, starting with McKenzie Wallace, which it must be confessed seemed in those days rather stodgy. I found W. T. Stead, John Foster Fraser, Henry Norman and others more to my liking. Our first trip to Tsardom ended with a week in Warsaw. I did not enjoy being back in a large city, though there were compensations such as a passing regiment of Cossacks, with great shaggy white lambskin hats and flowing coats—I had never seen Cossacks before, except at Barnum and Bailey's.

"Captain X* and I drove in a droshky first to the Cavalry barracks of the Emperor's Lancers, the crack regiment and the only one that has a mess like ours," records my diary a day later. "When we got there we were introduced to four Russian officers and they all saluted us and shook hands, we all went round and looked at the horses. Captain X told me several things with regard to the discipline of the Russian Army; one day last month the Cossack Regiment that is quartered here refused to march, when ordered by one of their officers who is unpopular, so after repeating the order three times, he took out his pistol and shot the right-hand man and then said he would go right down the line

* An English friend.

unless they obeyed, so when he said 'right turn, quick march' they stepped forth and walked over their dead comrade."

We said good-bye to Russian Poland at Alexandrowo, and here we read in the papers of the murder of the Empress of Austria in Switzerland. My diary also records the fact that on arrival at Berlin, there was news of Lord Kitchener's victory at Omdurman, "Our killed and wounded numbered 500, while the Dervishes lost 15,000 killed and 16,000 prisoners."

CHAPTER V

ETON — LAST YEAR

AFTER my wanderings I took an increasing interest in world affairs. I much looked forward to meetings of our House Debating Society, especially when political matters were discussed. The first debate of the season was "Whether Anarchists should be allowed freedom in the Queen's Realm": the subject was no doubt chosen in view of the recent assassination of the Austrian Empress at Geneva. I prepared my speech with care and was much disappointed to find the "House" in no mood for serious controversy on that occasion. In a letter home I sent a copy of my first speech: I do not know what my parents thought of their son's arguments:

"Whether Anarchists should be allowed freedom in the Queen's Realm."

Mr. President and Gentlemen,

This is a question I feel sure that many British subjects are asking to-day, since that frightful crime was perpetrated, on a defenceless woman, in Geneva and also since the Police are said to have discovered a similar plot against our Queen.

For my part I think that they should be allowed to remain in the Queen's Dominions or in England chiefly because:

Firstly, what defines an Anarchist and how is it possible to discover if a man is one? Must he have revolutionary ideas, must he have stated them in public, or must he belong to one of the Anarchists Clubs in the East End of London or elsewhere?

Secondly, perhaps a reserved Anarchist would not state his views aloud except to his few closest friends, and unless one of them betrays him how are the Authorities to discover he is one?

However, let us suppose that all these difficulties are overcome; would it then be wiser to exclude them? I say no, since England is the freest nation of the world; and to her freeness she owes the position she holds: for instance when she founds a colony she lets it have its own parliament, etc., and be almost independent of her.

On the other hand, the great Continental powers as soon as they have acquired a possession, send some thousands of soldiers and officials out there to keep the people and the place in order.

Thirdly, if Anarchists have got any gratitude, which very likely they have not; *then* even for the interests of their cause they must see that it would be far wiser not to touch any of our Royalty or great personages, as if they did so their freedom in England would be diminished by a great deal and perhaps they would be eventually excluded.

In conclusion I venture to hope that it is not only for the interest of their cause that they see *what a Queen* Great Britain has got and even if they do not like her, they cannot help respecting her; since after all they are human beings.

In the late 'nineties two figures largely monopolised the Imperial stage in Great Britain, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who was exhorting us in the Mother Country to "think Imperially," and Mr. Cecil Rhodes in South Africa, the hero of every young Englishman. It was a memorable day when Colonel Frank Rhodes ("Frankie"), Cecil Rhodes' brother, came down to lecture to the Volunteers about the Soudan Campaign. "I have never enjoyed anything so much in all my life," I wrote home. "Col. Rhodes ended up by saying that he had been through a good many campaigns, but the victories he looked back on with the greatest pleasure were when he was in the Eton XI in '69 and '70, when we beat Harrow. His last words were advising us to learn modern languages. He said he would have given anything to have learnt them."

My travels, my reading and hearing lectures added fresh fuel to the flame of my patriotism. My chief aims in life became to learn modern languages and to study history and to know everything there was to know about the British Empire. Its expansion became my dominant passion. I read every book I could get on the growth of the Empire. There was plenty of reading material at hand, for Major Myers*, then the adjutant of the Volunteers, had given a splendid collection of modern books on Colonial problems to the school library. On winter afternoons when I was not playing football, or fives, or out with the

* Fourteen years later, when at Ladysmith, I went to see Myers' grave. He gave his life for his country in the South African War.

beagles, I spent many hours reading in my study at "M'Tutors." There was no room for an armchair, so I invented the plan of drawing out my hip-bath from its hiding place and putting it in the middle of the floor. I filled it with cushions and then sat down in it, with my feet towards the fire, and on the floor by my side my books, an atlas and a glass jar of fruit drops—my youthful idea of bliss.

My reading matter that last winter at Eton included :—Younghusband's *South Africa To-day*, *Men who have made the Empire*, Baden Powell's *Matabele Campaign*, Younghusband's *Relief of Chitral*, *Ten Years in Equatoria*, Wingate's *Ten Years Captivity in the Madhu's Camp*, Mary Kingsley's *West African Studies*, *A Fleet in Being*, by Rudyard Kipling—referred to in my list of books read as "very loyal and good"—Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* and *Deeds that Won the Empire*, Fitchett. One of the books which made the deepest impression on me in 1899 was W. T. Stead's *United States of Europe*. All my reading was done from the standpoint of the British Empire. I paged through my atlas and pondered on the spaces coloured red. There were, alas, certain portions of the earth over which the Union Jack had once flown, and which had either been given back by a weak-kneed government, exchanged, or had been taken from us. These territories, no longer British, were a real sorrow to me—Morocco, the Dutch East Indies, Corfu, Heligoland, parts of South America, and, of course, the United States.

Every day in my rather hurried morning prayers, I prayed that one day the British flag might fly over Tibet, Mesopotamia and elsewhere. I have before me as I write the copy of a book of devotion called *Sursum Corda*, which I used before and after my confirmation. Blank pages were provided for intercession each day. On Sunday I prayed for Great Britain and the outer Empire, the Soudan, Egypt and the Sahara—no doubt I thought the French had no business there. On Monday I prayed for a list of sixteen portions of Africa, starting with the West African Colonies and ending up with Abyssinia. I hoped one day it would come under the Union Jack. On Tuesday, I specially

concentrated on Asia, including Siberia ; on Wednesday, India, Malaya and Australia ; on Thursday, China, New Zealand and the South Sea Islands ; on Friday the United States and South America ; and finally, on Saturday, I polished off Europe. To my mind the highest cause to which a young Briton could consecrate himself was the extension of the British Empire's area and influence. In optimistic moments I envisaged an all-red world—those were the days before the adjective "red" was associated with Moscow.

I was now doing German instead of Greek. "I do three hours German extras," I wrote, "with Monsieur Banck, who teaches French here and comes from Alsace-Lorraine, I am sure it will be a great help to me. I like German ever so much better than Greek. I am getting on quite well and having heard it spoken in Germany and Austria is a great help." I realised what a lucky fellow I was to be at Eton, and in an expansive mood I wrote to my parents: "I did enjoy seeing you, Father, last week, I do know how thankful I ought to be to have such parents."

I do not think that at that period in my life I had any serious qualms about the existing social order. Townsboys at Eton were just "cads" to us—the word was not used in the sense of implying caddish behaviour—but signified that they belonged to the working classes. On one occasion I reported to my family, "We had rather fun coming back from bathing at Cuckoo Weir, we had a fight with some 'cads.'" I certainly never questioned conditions which permitted the fortunate few to enjoy all the delights of Eton and condemned the rest of British youth to comparative outer darkness.

We knew very little about industrial England. The only time that I began to be puzzled was during a visit to the Eton Mission at Hackney Wick, then in charge of St. Clair Donaldson,* when I saw something of slum conditions. How was it that in the heart of the greatest Empire the world had ever seen, there were human pigsties? But I put that problem aside for ten years. I had other

* Now Bishop of Salisbury. I met him in Queensland in 1913, where he was Archbishop of Brisbane.

things to think of. The Empire had a great civilising rôle to play in Darkest Africa and Asia. It was not our fault if there was a sordid East End in London. I rarely went there and I soon forgot about it.

My last term at Eton was the Easter half in 1899. I was just over sixteen, and in view of my subsequent connection with the *Spectator* it is interesting to note that I was then a regular reader of that paper. Ill-health dogged my steps to the end of my Eton career. I was sent home after influenza before the end of my last half.

Lionel Ford wrote in my final report: "Wrench's work for me has been done keenly and industriously—the modern work very intelligently too. It is curious to see the difference between living and dead languages, etc., in their appeal to him. Over his Classics he is quite muddle-headed; he gets his Verses out more or less correctly now by the labour he gives to them: yet it is not natural work for him. Whereas in history, geography, and all topics of the day his interest simply burns. His German promises well. The *History of our Own Times* which we did for private business obviously appealed to him, and he read ahead by himself."

When I went home in March, 1899, I thought I was going to spend another two and a half years at Eton before I went abroad to learn languages for my diplomatic career. Owing to my father and mother's decision to take me away from Eton during the holidays I was spared the sad good-byes to friends. Lionel Ford had started to prepare me for Confirmation and our Vicar at home,* Canon Elliott, completed the preparation. I was confirmed at Kingstown by the Archbishop of Dublin in March, 1899. The Archbishop took for his text, "Hold that fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii, 2). My Confirmation was very real to me. I felt like poor little grimy Tom, the sweep's boy, in Charles Kingsley's *Water Babies*, who discarded his old sooty exterior in the river and came out white. I felt as if my soul had had a new birth. I had a new scale of values.

Several reasons influenced my parents in their decision

* Ballybrack, Co. Dublin.

to take me away from Eton ; my ill-health, the place never really agreed with me, and above all my desire to travel in Europe and to begin as soon as possible the study of modern languages. Ever since my travels the previous year in Germany and Poland I had longed to be wandering again in far places. If I had stayed on at Eton I should have had two more happy years and increased my mental equipment. But, looking back, I think my parents did right.

In July I came over from Ireland to see the Headmaster, Dr. Warre, and get my leaving book, which was *Thomas Gray's Poems*. This was the only occasion on which I had ever talked to the Head ; to me he had always been a remote kind of Deity that I saw in Upper Chapel. He was kind to me and wished me luck. Then I went round to see Lionel Ford. "Dear old Ford was very pleased to see me," I wrote home. "We talked together for an hour and a half. . . . It really was very nice seeing my old friends. Certainly Eton is a lovely place. I quite envy everyone who is there, but all the same I am sure it was best and wisest for me to leave, as, of course, the great things there are enjoyment and self." Perhaps this was too sweeping a generalisation.

As I look back on Eton thirty-five years ago, how do I sum up my experiences ? I loved Eton, and to this day I cannot walk about the School Yard and through Weston's Yard to the Playing Fields without a thrill. I probably had as good a "time" as I have ever had in my life. At Eton I learnt the team spirit and some lessons of self-control and restraint. My interest in public affairs, my love of my country, were stimulated. I became interested in history, in the world. I made many friends among the masters and boys. I learnt good manners and how to get on with people. On the debit side I thought too much of externals ; I had not read *Sartor Resartus* then—smart clothes seemed very important. The fellows in Pop* had the right to wear clothes forbidden to ordinary mortals—in the summer white waistcoats, patent-leather shoes, in the winter special greatcoats with collars turned down, and

* The Eton Society, the members of which have special privileges.

rolled umbrellas and coloured knitted waistcoats. The fellows in Pop included the members of the Cricket Eleven the Football "Field" and the crew of the Eight and other popular boys. They were our heroes. No public man in after life ever seemed so "god-like" as did the members of Pop to us ordinary fry. I wonder what Carlyle would have thought of the place clothes occupied in our minds. To walk about in patent leather shoes and smart clothes was the hallmark of the Great. Poor collegers or oppidans in the Sixth Form, not in Pop, although they were allowed to wear stick-ups, had none of these privileges; they came in for no veneration.

At Eton I got into extravagant ways, and did not worry much then about the under-dog. As I look back on my life I have to admit that Providence provided just the kind of training during the next few years which I needed as a corrective to Eton. I sometimes wonder what I would have been like if I had not received the plentiful knocks which came my way during my first few years in London.

No account of Public School life would be complete without some reference to the problem of puberty. I shall make no startling revelations for citation in the popular Press. The masters lived in one world and the boys in another. It was almost impossible for a master to cross the invisible barrier that divided us. The boys had great *esprit de corps*, and stood by their fellows. Impurity was denounced from the pulpit, in the pupil room and in the private study. The awful example of Oscar Wilde, then serving his term at Reading Gaol, was held up to us. One preacher went so far as to suggest that if justice were done, half the school would be serving terms of penal servitude.

Probably in the past thirty years a great advance has been made in the sane treatment of the problems of adolescence. Much suffering on the part of young and sensitive boys, on arriving at Public Schools, could be avoided if those responsible for the morals of the young, parents and schoolmasters, could win the confidence of their boys. The idea that boys are sexual monsters, and if discovered must be expelled, should be discarded. Young things are naturally

inquisitive ; they want to experiment. It should be possible by judicious methods to lay emphasis on the bitter struggle which faces every boy. If he wishes to descend to the level of mere animal, he may do so, but immortal man was not made for such ends. As Professor Huxley wrote, he must "be one whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience." . . . He must be taught "to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself." Even if he has fallen or lost a trench on the battlefield, he should not be threatened with the disgrace of expulsion from school. If his elders could once win his confidence and let him feel that he was not alone in his struggles, that they were going to stand by him whatever happened, a great advance would be made.

Every guider of youth through the difficult years to manhood should hang up in his study two sentences : "The Saints were the sinners who kept on trying," and the words of Dame Julian of Norwich : "In every soul that shall be saved is a godly will that never assented to sin, nor ever shall . . . But for the failing of love on our part is all our travail." Fear will never eradicate vice, but love might.

CHAPTER VI

TSARDOM IN 1899

AFTER leaving Eton I spent four months at home in Ireland. In May, 1899, the Church of Ireland held a Missionary Exhibition at Dublin lasting for ten days at which I was invited to assist. To an enthusiastic philatelist there was a thrill in meeting people who had actually spent their lives in far-off lands. I wandered with delight from stall to stall portraying the life and customs of China, India, Japan, N.W. Canada and Uganda. I felt quite at home in this world-wide environment. I forgot which particular job in the exhibition—held in the old Rotunda—was entrusted to me. It included the selling of tickets for special exhibits from the various fields of Missionary endeavour: a native of the Dinkah Country was to give a talk in the African Court, Miss Gordon-Cumming was giving an address on Work in China for the Blind, Dr. Herbert Lankester was describing Medical Missions, there was a costume lecture by a "Native Lady from the Lebanon" on life in the Holy Land, a talk about the Red Indians in Patagonia in the South American Court, a talk at the Mission to Lepers stall.

I had studied the methods of the showman at Barnum and Bailey's and I proceeded to try and introduce them here. I called out at the top of my voice "This way for the side-shows—come and hear 'The Native Lady from the Lebanon' or 'The Thrilling Talk in the Uganda Village'." Success crowned my efforts. To the surprise of the other helpers I had soon disposed of all the tickets I had for sale and I had to keep returning for fresh supplies. But my triumph was short-lived. A benign dignitary of the Church of Ireland came up to me and said in kind words that he thought my methods were not sufficiently dignified for so serious a gathering. I subsequently restrained my ardour to the detriment of the side-shows, although I disposed of

3d. tickets and programmes to the extent of £120 during the ten days.

I was much affected by the human contacts I made. Men and women, white and coloured, aflame with love of God and of their fellows were present. One well-known doctor had felt the "call." He had given up a lucrative practice in Harley Street to become a medical missionary. I met missionaries from around the seven seas whose lives were radiated by the love of Christ. They were doing work that appealed to me. Since my Confirmation I had wanted to take my place in the ranks of the Army of Light. The opportunity was now provided.

The exhibition closed daily at 10 p.m. All the workers assembled for the closing hymn—

So be it, Lord ; Thy Throne shall never,
Like earth's proud empires, pass away.
Thy Kingdom stands, and grows for ever,
Till all Thy creatures own Thy sway.

Tired out but elated and full of high purpose I caught the last train from Westland Row station to Ballybrack, ten miles distant. Milk and cake were left out for me. In my brief evening prayers I thanked God that I was doing worth-while work. I was glad I had left Eton, otherwise this opportunity would never have come my way.

I went through a form of temporary "conversion." Previously, prior to my Confirmation, my religion had implied rather perfunctory church-going on Sundays, and learning the Collect by heart each week. An American book, *In His Steps*, by C. M. Sheldon, was given to me by my mother and it affected me deeply. My ambition to become British Ambassador in Paris—for, finding entering the Navy was impossible, I wanted to become a diplomat—gave way for a time to the desire to become a missionary. But the "call" was not the real one.

My mornings were devoted to reading with a tutor, to history, learning shorthand, and studying the rudiments of German and Russian. I did not become proficient in shorthand however, never attaining a greater speed than eighty words a minute, because I was not able to give

sufficient time to practice. At one time I used to keep my diary partly in shorthand, but alas, to-day I can no longer read it. My father's office was in the Irish Land Commission building in Upper Merrion Place, Dublin, and a desk was installed for me here. While trying to concentrate on my studies I would listen with one ear to discussions on Irish Land Purchase, on Co-operation, and the latest news concerning Irish politics. Part of the morning was spent with a coach at Trinity College.

My tutor had an active mind and our conversation roamed over wide ranges. He was an agnostic and this was the first time I recall having arguments about religion. He had a highly developed critical faculty and I frequently left his chambers with uncomfortable feelings. The spiritual enthusiasm generated at the Missionary Exhibition began to wane. Even the fervour which my Confirmation had awoken in me became less intense. My religious beliefs were not the result of mental processes of my own. I was a member of the Church of Ireland as a result of my environment. I would probably have been an equally convinced Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Mohammedan or Hindu, had Providence so willed it. In those hours at Trinity College I learnt different lessons from those which I was supposed to be imbibing. Initial lessons of tolerance, the knowledge that prejudice—National or Religious—is a dangerous thing. My tutor helped to disencumber my mind of Fundamentalism, of the conception of an anthropomorphic God, of a Heaven in the skies with streets of gold, in which my forbears wandered in flowing garments.

My father had long promised us a treat. He told me that he had set £500 aside for the family's summer holiday—the family consisted of my father and mother, my sister Winifride and myself, as my only brother was in South Africa and my elder sister was married.* I was told that in consultation with the family, I might plan out the tour. For the next few weeks my passion for time-tables and railway guides came in useful. I visited the various tourist agencies in Dublin and returned home with pockets bulging with brochures. My mind roamed among

* Mary Porter.



the familiar pages of Continental Bradshaw and Cook's time-table. I planned ten-week tours from Cape Town to Vancouver and Alaska, from Sweden to Samarkand. A process of elimination at a family conclave resulted in the final decision to travel through Russia from St. Petersburg to Moscow, across the Russian Steppes to the Caucasus, by boat to the Crimea, thence home *via* Constantinople, Asia Minor and Greece. No tour was ever more carefully planned.

My reading matter included Bryce's *Transcaucasia and Ararat*, Kinglake's *Crimea*, Hamley's *Crimean War*, and Burnaby's *On Horse-back through Asia Minor*. My dreams were almost coming true. I was going to see far-off places, away from the beaten track, far beyond the ministrations of Thomas Cook or Henry Lunn, even Carl Baedeker did not provide an English edition of his Russian Guide Book. We travelled straight through to St. Petersburg. When we arrived at the Russian frontier station Wirballen I felt like an old hand. The Customs formalities and signs in the Russian language were familiar. "Curiously enough we had the same porter as in the previous year." (*Diary*.) I was back in Tsardom.

St. Petersburg was the right place to start our pilgrimage. It was the western gateway to Russia. The government and administration of that mighty country were concentrated there. The Governors of the Russian Provinces, the youngest ensign in regiments serving in the Caucasus or Central Asia, thought longingly of "Peter."* St. Petersburg was much less Russian than Holy Mother Moscow. I imagined the Tsar's advisers writing out instructions to officials from the Arctic Ocean to Port Arthur, on the Pacific, which would be flashed along the telegraph lines. It would be great fun to be a Russian official, civil servants wore uniform and medals. Many of them wore top-boots. I tried to imagine clerks in my father's office in Dublin, the Irish Land Commission, wearing top-boots. But somehow here they did not seem out of place. "St. Petersburg is like no

* Familiar term for St. Petersburg.

other town I know," I wrote, "the chief things that strike one are, its vastness, symbolic of the huge Empire of which it is the capital, great palaces, large houses, broad and long streets, huge open squares, the mighty Neva. The streets are cobbled, but the main thoroughfares have a roadway paved with wood for the carriages. On our way to St. Isaac's Cathedral we passed the fine monument of Peter the Great on horseback." His presence seemed to brood over St. Petersburg as Cecil Rhodes' did over Bulawayo, if one can compare a world capital with a small town. In each case a man, with large views, had planned and schemed, and fought nature—an Empire builder. I had always been interested in Peter the Great, ever since my mother took me to see the house he lived in at Zaandam in Holland four years previously.

St. Petersburg thirty-five years ago gave the impression of wealth and luxury. Fabergé the jeweller had a world-wide reputation. In his shop I saw unfamiliar precious stones, whose names I did not know. The Imperial Ballet was unsurpassed. French and German culture were rivals for Russian favour. In Society French was spoken exclusively, but once St. Petersburg was left behind and in the commercial world German reigned supreme. Much of the business was in the hands of the Jews and they of course spoke German. English was comparatively little spoken except in the smart sporting set. During our travels, however, we met some returned emigrants from the United States who spoke English with an American accent. The Russians were wonderful linguists; I greatly envied the ease with which they turned from one language to another.

My first visit to a British Embassy was when my sister and I were taken by our parents to lunch with the British Ambassador, Sir Charles Scott. I had eagerly looked forward to the occasion. I wanted to see at close quarters members of a profession to which I hoped in a few years to belong. I expected to find much-travelled intelligent Englishmen, full of information about Russia and its teeming millions, about Anglo-Russian problems, and who would be ready to talk about Nihilists and tell me

interesting stories of the lives of political exiles in Siberia. I received one of the great disappointments of my early life. The Ambassador was gracious but of course only spoke a few words to a school boy. I was placed between two of the secretaries. They seemed uninterested in Russia, and one of them had been a year in the country and had never been to Moscow. I felt my spirits falling, in that correct atmosphere enthusiasm was out of place. We talked chiefly about England and Eton. I was glad my clothes had been made at Eton, that my trousers were properly turned up and that the bottom button of my waistcoat was undone. I became less keen about the diplomatic career and it seemed to me that being a diplomat was not nearly as exciting as I had imagined; there was much too much "Society" about it to my taste.

The important part that religion played in the lives of the Russian people made a deep impression on me in 1899. I was in a country where things of the spirit entered into the lives of the ordinary folk in a way they did not in England. I was constantly being reminded of Ireland. The Irish Landlords and the tenants had their counterpart in the Russian Landlord, the Bareen (the Lord) and the Moujik. It was feudalism. There was also a "a put off till to-morrow" spirit everywhere. If you asked if your post-horses or meals were ready—the answer was always the same: *sichas* (immediately). Another very frequent expression was *nichevo* (it doesn't matter). Unlike Ireland there was only one Church, the Holy Orthodox Church—I purposely generalise; at its head stood the Little Father, the Tsar. In every little Russian village the church, frequently of wood, with golden cupola, dominated the district. As you drove across the Steppes before sunset the peasants would be returning home to their villages of wooden houses and the sun's rays would glisten on the rounded roofs of the churches. You could not help noticing the churches. Their cupolas, gold or green, were so unlike what I had been accustomed to. They were a symbol, the symbol of the other world, such a reality to the Russian moujik.

Wherever you went in city or village the churches were full. Wherever you went peasants were praying. When your carriage-driver (*Isvostchik*) passed an ikon (holy picture) or shrine he crossed himself. Incense, lights, vestments, plaintive chanting, golden altar screens, holy pictures covered with pearls and rubies in the churches, brought colour into the lives of the faithful. The people were not ashamed of their religion : why should they be ? Everyone believed, or if they didn't they kept quiet about their lack of faith. Russia was no place for atheists or dissenters. People were not ashamed of praying in the open. "From the market square we walked to the main street and then to the Church," I wrote, "all the way down the street people were kneeling and saying their prayers in the open . . . the people kiss the feet of a Crucifix and also kiss the ground ; in the Church during service people walk about, sit and stand ; a large black and white cat walked down the aisle but nobody took any notice of it. They were intent on their prayers." A black and white cat walking down the aisle in the Church at home in England would have created a commotion. But here the Church was part of ordinary life, not a place you only went to on Sundays and which was locked up for the rest of the week. Why shouldn't black and white cats walk about ? "At one of the gates in Moscow we saw a very interesting sight. Some hundreds of peasants were waiting to get into the Iberian Chapel and kiss the famous ikon that was outside. They bowed down and lay down on the roadway with their foreheads touching the ground. I could not picture people doing that at Windsor outside St. George's Chapel." (*Diary.*)

Wherever we went we saw religious pilgrims. I had never seen pilgrims before, people who actually thought it worth while to leave their ordinary jobs and go to far parts of the country to pray at some Lara or holy place. The pilgrims did not confine themselves to their own country. Distance and discomfort had no terrors. They were desperately in earnest, just as much in earnest as the Mahommedans I was to see six weeks later in Turkey,

who were always looking to Mecca. I saw parties of Russian peasant pilgrims returning from the Holy Land.

The religion of these people was certainly very different from either the Protestant Church in Ireland, the Anglican Church or Roman Catholicism. There were Saints with unfamiliar names, St. Basil, St. Sergius and St. Vladimir.

I thought of the lecture Dr. Creighton (then Bishop of London) had given at Eton, when he referred to the work of those who were trying to bring about closer relations between Eastern Orthodox Christianity and ourselves. I hoped they would be successful. Why should Christians hate each other? In Ireland one section of Christ's followers abhorred the doctrines of the other. I had been taught that making the sign of the Cross and ritual were institutions of the evil one—but were they? I stood by a big marble column at the back of a great dimly lighted church surrounded by peasants, smelling of unfamiliar things, perhaps it was garlic, and making sounds which we had been taught at school to suppress. I forgot my neighbours and looked up beyond the clouds of incense to the golden reredos. Wonderfully robed priests and their assistants in the dim distance moved methodically about. Men's voices chanted in old Slavonic in a deep bass—of course I could not understand—but perhaps I did understand. The language they were using required no words, it was the eternal language of the Soul.

As I stood there something in me was reaching out to unfathomable distances—I seemed to be stepping out of my body and the "me" was engulfed in a great stream of light. I was piercing through the veil to Reality. I pressed the bottoms of the palms of my hands into my eyeballs to concentrate the better—I wished I could retain this moment. I was in a black world. Circles of light seemed to be spreading from the centre like the ripples on a lake when a stone drops into the depths. By varying the pressure of my hands I was able to change the colours in my visionary world. It was a kind of kaleidoscope. The men's voices went on. I felt as if I were on a mountain top. How easy it would be to be

good if I always felt like this. My mind began to wander, what would we have for lunch, what was the head priest like in ordinary life? Had he had many sexual temptations as a boy? Had . . . but it was time to go. We were back in the glaring sunshine. I blinked my eyes. Everything out of doors was indistinct. I kept screwing my eyes up tight to make them feel natural. I had been to far places—why couldn't I return to those far places by an effort of will? That world had gone. Why did things seem so different when you were back in this world? How many "me's" were there? Which was the real "me" and was one special "me" always in control? . . . It was time for lunch, we walked through the market place—"it was crowded with people, mostly peasants. The women wore coloured skirts and bright bodices and coloured handkerchiefs tied round their heads. The men wore top boots and shirts with pretty embroidered fronts. The peasants looked a wild lot and some wore coats made of sheep skin with the fur turned inside. Some of them had cloth bound round their legs tied with cord instead of top boots and a kind of leather sandal." (Diary.)

Another discovery I made in Russia was that the world was much more varied than I expected and that British influence was not as all-embracing as I had thought. Hitherto, when I had thought of the world it was a world in which, for the most part, Pax Britannica held sway. When I serenaded Queen Victoria in Diamond Jubilee year, two years before, I was taking my part in a tribute to the Victorian era and all it stood for, the expansion of the British Empire, the expansion of British industry. Anglo-Saxon civilisation was carrying all before it and must ultimately be world-wide. But in Russia, metaphorically speaking, I was pulled up with a bump. I was in a new civilisation, in a world-state nearly as large as the British Empire. And the Russian World Empire had this great advantage, its 8,000,000 square miles, equal in size to Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Newfoundland and the Mother Country rolled into one, and more besides, was *contiguous* territory. It was one

territorial unit. Ten thousand miles of ocean did not sunder its parts. In the Russian Empire I found a firmly established civilisation, with Slav culture, with a religion and literature entirely alien to ours, with an outlook on life as different from mine as chalk from cheese. Any thoughts I might have nursed of British ideals and culture sweeping all before them must be revised. The Russian World State would always have its place in the sun, just as long as the world lasted. In future in thinking about Asia I must remember two main European influences, the British and the Russian. I began to understand what was meant by the menace of the Russian Bear. I thought of Madame Novikoff's words: "The Germans have reached their day, the English their mid-day, the French their afternoon, the Italians their evening, the Spanish their night; but the Slavs stand on the threshold of the morning." Eight years later when the Anglo-Russian Treaty dividing Persia into British and Russian spheres of influence was signed I was glad. I thought co-operation with Russia in Asia was a wise move.

In Russia little interest seemed to be taken in Great Britain, outside the very restricted sphere of the high aristocracy. Little was known about the British Empire, apart from India. In Great Britain we had had the Queen's Diamond Jubilee junketings and we were priding ourselves that the future was ours. Russia knew little about our activities and did not care.

I made friends with a Russian schoolboy of my age, called Plato. He had cropped hair and wore a uniform, as many Russian boys did. He had never heard of Eton, although he spoke quite good English. What would he have thought if he could have attended an "absence" in the School yard and seen our top-hatted multitudes? He and I belonged to different planets. Anyhow it was important that we should try to understand each other's point of view because presumably both our Empires must exist side by side.

CHAPTER VII

THE CAUCASUS, THE CRIMEA AND ASIA MINOR

IT is difficult for us islanders to grasp the size of Russia. How can one generalise about "All the Russias"? Thirty years ago each province or district seemed self-contained and self-absorbed. Seven years later, when I went to Canada I was constantly reminded of Russia, similar vegetation, rolling plains called steppes here and prairies there, and the paramount importance of agriculture.

The man who tilled the soil was the real controller of Russia's destiny. Roads and railways are of supreme importance in a civilised state. Roads in our sense of the word were non-existent in most parts of Russia in 1899. One went bumping across the steppes in a tarantass, a peasant's cart, or a troika (three-horse carriage); there was often mud or dust up to the axle.

The railroad was the real cement that bound the Tsar's huge dominions. Railways played a much greater part in the scheme of things than with us. For hours one would go rumbling along the single track at about twenty-five miles an hour or less. Russian trains rarely exceeded this speed. "After leaving Koslov," my diary records, "we saw a large Borzoi, and Father threw him some meat patties and he kept up with the train for over half a mile." After passing through endless forests, with occasional clearings and villages of wooden houses, or over an unending plain, in the distance the cupola of a church would appear on the horizon. Your land-ship was coming into port. Suddenly everything was bustle. All the inhabitants were on the railway platform. Policemen with swords, officers in white tunics, private soldiers, long-haired priests in black alpaca coats, officials, Jewish traders and peasants spitting out the husks of sun-flower seeds, as they chewed the kernels, or perhaps scratching themselves. The manufacturers of insect powder should

have done a great business in pre-War Russia. If you were travelling at night and went into the waiting-room, you would probably find groups of peasants, with their worldly belongings, lying about on the floor like dogs.

Most people go to Asia by sea. I walked into it over the summit of the famous Caucasus military road. The fact that I first visited Asia overland from Russia has always left in my mind the consciousness that Russia is largely an Asiatic Power, that she must always play a predominant part in Asia. European Russia and Asiatic Russia are closely linked, Russia is the main connecting link between the two continents.

A visit to the Caucasus was an interesting experience because it enabled me to study Russian "colonial" methods and to see something of Slav penetration of the East and how cleverly Russia managed to absorb alien peoples. The people seemed quite content to acknowledge the fatherly rule of the Tsar. My knowledge of this region had been scanty till I read Bryce's book. My mind was a jumble of loosely connected facts. A land of great snow-clad mountains, of which I knew only Elbruz and Kazbek by name, inhabited by fierce Circassian tribes, whose women had flashing eyes and excelled in sex appeal. The harems of Turkish Sultans and Grandees were replenished from Circassia.

Unfortunately, it was only years later that I became acquainted with the rich Russian literature about these regions. I read and re-read in the original Lermontof's *Modern Hero*, I became absorbed in Tolstoi's *The Kossacks*, and *A Prisoner of the Caucasus*.

I was glad that my visit was in pre-motoring days. Nowadays the journey from Vladikavkas, on the European side, to Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, through the Dariel Pass and over the military road by motor-coach in a day, must be a much less exciting experience than the four days' journey in a diligence drawn by six or seven horses, complete with Cossack driver and guard. We were in an entirely new world. Everyone rode, and the

men wore daggers and wore the picturesque Circassian dress of lamb-skin hats, flowing coat with rows of cartridges on their breasts, leather-worked girdle and top boots. In different districts were distinct tribes with their own languages and customs. History had stood still here for a thousand years till the Russians built the military road and finally overcame the native resistance thirty years previously.

By the end of the nineteenth century the Caucasus had been completely pacified by Russia, but the process of pacification was sufficiently recent to enable one to envisage life thirty or forty years previously. And as far as externals were concerned the inhabitants must have looked and lived very much as they did in the days of Petchorin, familiar to readers of Lermontof. The men were warriors, they were splendid riders and marksmen. They raided neighbouring villages inhabited by tribes with whom they had feuds. They returned from their successful pillaging to their villages for drinking bouts. Wine, women and song, plus hardship and fighting and sport, summed them up. They were elemental. You saw the woman of your desires and you took her. You died young, but while you were in the world you *lived*.

Three or four years subsequently, when I was engaged in the postcard publishing business I visited manufacturing towns in Lancashire. The mid-day syren had just gone and I watched ten thousand work-people pour out of the gates of a huge factory—a great black throng, the clogs of many of the lasses clattered on the cobbles. If they were lucky, these 10,000 human beings would spend their days, till they were too old to work, leading that same life—up by candle or lamp light in the winter, for eight hours every day in that murky atmosphere tending a machine or loom, a break for dinner, then back again till the syren blew—year in and year out, with a week's holiday in the summer for the Blackpool wakes. What a life! If that was not slavery, what was? I thought of the tribes in the Caucasus—the very opposite to everything in Wigan and Oldham. “Is the life of the

modern industrial worker worth while?" would have been a good subject for our Debating Society at Eton. What share of the things that make for a reasonable existence did they get? There was much to be said for the Caucasian way of living. You were loyal to your own tribe, you hated your enemy across that range of mountains or on the other side of that river.

"At 'Krestovaya Gora' we crossed into 'Asia.' I was the first member of the party to go in. It seems too strange to realise that we are in a different Continent. The site is marked by a monument on one side and a huge cross on the other side of the road . . ." (Diary.)

This extract from my diary tells of an exciting drive by moonlight:

"From Doushet to Tsyllkan, the road is down hill and we had four big white horses very fresh, and one of them with a very hard mouth. For about half an hour we trotted fast. As the road began to descend the horses got *fairly* under way, the big horse took it into his head to go faster still. We simply flew. There was *no brake* on our diligence, as using a brake was said to damage the roads! Our driver was fortunately a huge man. He tried to pull up the horses but was unable to do so. On we went, down and down. There before us was the mail coach with a Cossack going much slower than we were. On we came till our pole almost touched the flank of the Cossack's horse. We all got rigid with fear, when fortunately we passed over some heavy ground which helped to arrest the coach. The driver of the mail coach lashed his horses to increase the distance between us, and by tremendous pulls and jerks our coachman managed to stop our horses; it really was not their fault, the diligence was much too heavy to have no brake." (Diary.)

For three nights we had slept in our clothes and we had been devoured by every kind of insect. I take the following typical account of a night spent on the way, from my journal: "We got up at 5.0 after a rather bad night. Our beds consisted of mattresses on the floor.

All night through people kept walking in and out of our room. There was no dressing as we had slept in our clothes. After the three of us had washed in a soup plate we wandered about the house looking for a servant to cook our breakfast. At last we found two boys lying with a coat over them on two benches: I have always heard that the Russian servants just lie about like dogs anywhere, but I had never seen it before . . .”

In Georgia I had my first vision of the unchanging East, of the oxen treading out the peasants' corn as it was done in the time of Abraham, of veiled women working in the fields and of flat-roofed mud houses. The bazaars of Tiflis were a never-ending joy. Here Persian and Kurd, Russian, Armenian, Georgian and Jew jostled one another.

“The Persians wear very high astrakhan caps and long flowing robes and very elaborate silver belts of beautiful workmanship. The majority of the Georgians wear little coloured skull caps, blue tunics and baggy blue trousers. The different trades keep to different streets, so in one you have silver-smiths, in another arms-makers, in another carpets, another clothes, hardware and so on. One of the most curious districts to us was where they sell the wine of the country and store it in huge bullock skins—looking like inflated legless cows lying on their backs. It was difficult to take photos as the people crowded round us.” (*Diary.*)

To reach Batum we made a detour and went by post-carriage from Borjom, to Atskours, Akaltzick and Abbas Tuman. We were right off the beaten track—tourists were unknown. We were in a country inhabited by Muslims. The men wore turbans and the women, even while working in the fields, were veiled. “Atskours, on the Kur, is overlooked by an old ruined castle and there are the remains of a Christian church, which had long ago fallen into disuse, owing to the conversion of the population in these parts from Christianity to Islam. The town is built on the side of a hill, the houses are in

layers and the roofs of the lower layer form the street of the ones above. It is rather a curious sensation while walking along to find oneself nearly falling through a chimney into a house below. A few armed men looking like cut-throats, were riding about, but most of them were out at the far end of the village threshing. The women wore long whitish robes, and upon spying us covered their faces or scuttled away behind doorways. There were great numbers of children calmly playing about naked; they were awfully fat. The threshing operations were very primitive. There was an open space covered with corn, and on it four or five pairs of bullocks attached to boards like a sledge on which stands a boy." (*Diary.*)

Some primitive instinct stirred when I watched these peasants doing anything so elemental as treading out corn. Man does not live by bread alone—quite true—but he must have bread as a start. In our western city civilisation the individual is too much divorced from nature—a slice of bread on most British breakfast tables calls up no visions of the threshing and grinding of British wheat. Wheat comes from far countries and many city dwellers have never seen waving cornfields, or certainly have never seen threshing. So far has the separation of town and country gone with us. When you see treading out the corn by the patient ox, in the glare of an Eastern sun, you feel linked up with biblical times. I know I did. You stood on a board and let the ox drag you over the surface of the threshing floor on which was spread out the ripened wheat. It was one way of spending the day. If you were a philosopher you would have plenty of time for thinking. Were there many nobler professions than cultivating mother earth by the sweat of your brow? I wondered.

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My reading had well prepared me for visiting the scenes of the Crimean War, and we spent several full and interesting days at places with names with a familiar ring to British people. The Crimean War was only forty-four years away, and my father and mother both

remembered hearing about it as children. My mother was six at the time. My diary records a visit to the Russian Cemetery at Sebastopol: "At the entrance was an old Russian Crimean veteran, who had been wounded in the war. The cemetery covers a little hill, and there are about 40,000 Russian soldiers buried there. It is very impressive looking at one of the regimental graves, in which sometimes three or four thousand men are buried.

"We drove through the town towards the big fort and on to the hill of Malakoff, which is notorious as being the place that the French stormed in the war. Inside we saw an unexploded mine and the places where the Russians were. Not far from the ruins is a bronze statue to the Russian Admiral Lazaref, and also quite close is the cemetery containing French, Turkish and Russian dead. Over 30,000 Russians were killed in defending the fort, and in one pit there are 15,000 buried, or rather heaped in; this does make one realise how awful war is.

"From here we drove over a mere track on the hillside to the Redan, the place that was taken by the English but had to be evacuated later in the day. There is a large white stone monument to mark the situation with an inscription in English. Just about here we bought nineteen bullets of various sizes from an old peasant for fifty kopeks (1/-), which he had dug up in the battle-field, after forty-four years. A mile or so on there were two men who sold us three English 6d. bits, dated 1853, which they also had dug up, for sixty kopeks, these last we got by a well where our horses were being watered. Just think, being able to buy sixpenny bits for fourpence."

A visit to the Crimea is to be recommended to advocates of war. How many people in Great Britain or Russia, even in 1899, were able to explain just why British yokels and town-dwellers were sent to kill Russian peasants? If these tens of thousands of skeletons could have risen out of their graves on the heights round Sebastopol and given their views, what would they have said? What had been gained by the sacrifice? The Russians had repelled an invader. Their position was easier to under-

stand. But what were the French and British doing, careering round the Black Sea, championing the Crescent against the Cross?

"From here it was not far to the plain of Balaclava. In the centre stands a large obelisk, put up by the British to mark the crux of the fight, and to the left of this, looking towards Yalta, is the direction taken by the charge of the Light Brigade." (*Diary*.)

The last page in my Russian diary, written at Sebastopol, runs: "We had meant to go and see 'The Geisha' at the theatre but found out that it was not on till to-morrow night. As there was a lot to write in this journal, I started at nine, and W. and I went on till midnight. As I write this, father is snoring and roaring in his sleep and the wind is howling, so I am afraid it will be rough." (*Diary*.)

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The modernised Turkey of to-day, with its reformed spelling, its unveiled women and fezless men, must be unrecognisable to anyone who knew it in the old days. I had always wanted to visit Constantinople. Our stay synchronised with the new orientation in Turkish foreign policy. Since the days of the Crimean War, British influence had been supreme. But the old order was changing. The young Turks were seeking to create a new and better order, and German influence in the Levant, since Kaiser Wilhelm's visit to Jerusalem in 1898, was in the ascendant. If Great Britain had played her cards differently, Turkey would never have come into the War. But that is another story.

A first visit to pre-War Turkey was a landmark in the globe-trotter's experience. Constantinople in 1899 conjures up memories of the beautiful Bosphorus, of minarets and cypresses, of poor scratching emaciated dogs, of coloured silks in the bazaars, of mysterious smells, of the old wooden Galata Bridge, where were to be seen people of every race and colour. To-day, no doubt, much of the glamour, the poor dogs and doubtless the smells have disappeared.

The British Empire was the greatest Muslim Power.

A visit to the city where the Sultan, the Caliph of Islam, dwelt, was of great interest. Through most of the nineteenth century, friendship with Turkey had been a feature of British foreign policy. Constantinople is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. No one could resist its spell. I loved its tortuous streets, its romance and even its smells. In the Caucasus and the Crimea we were on the outskirts of Islam, here we were in the stronghold of the Crescent.

The dogs of Stamboul were a constant sorrow. I used to buy several large loaves of bread daily and feed my canine friends in the neighbourhood of our hotel. Sometimes I would be surrounded by fifty or sixty dogs. I was never bitten. A few years before the war, the dogs were sent by the young Turks with progressive ideas to the island of Oxeia in the Sea of Marmora, where the poor brutes were left to their fate. I am glad their sufferings are over.

One of the first duties of the tourist was to visit the Howling Dervishes at Scutari, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus. "The service of the Tekkeh of the Rufai or Howling Dervishes takes place every Thursday in a small square-shaped room, with seats round three sides for the onlookers; the ceremony lasted for nearly two hours. It was a most extraordinary spectacle. It started by the head Dervish, a small dark man, with very keen eyes, reading a parable in Arabic and then giving a sort of explanation. This lasted for about twenty minutes, then all the Dervishes began to chant, making the most extraordinary row. All the while they kept bending to and fro till you would imagine their backs must have broken. After half-an-hour of this swaying, they stood up in a line and kept bending forwards and sideways, a very curious motion, all the while shouting. Every now and then the head Dervish would walk in front of them and blow in their faces and further excite them. They were now foaming at the mouth and in a frenzy. They never stopped swaying. At the end of an hour, all they could do in the chanting line was to grunt.

"After the ceremony, clothes belonging to sick

persons were brought and blessed by the head Dervish, and shortly after this ill men and children were brought, and by twos and threes they were laid out on the ground and he walked on them each separately; this is supposed to cure them!! It was really too much for us when a little howling child was stood upon by the head Dervish." (*Diary.*)

My diary records a visit to the Selamlık to watch Sultan Abdul Hamid go in state to his devotions. The Sultan had been the sick man of Europe for many years—sooner or later all this pomp and ceremony would pass away. Everyone freely discussed the passing of Abdul Hamid. The prophets were right in their prophecies, although they underestimated the resilience of the old regime.

"After an early breakfast we drove to the Selamlık to watch the Sultan go to the Mosque. The Mosque of Hamidieh Jami is situated on the heights beyond Pera. On arrival we were shown into the guard house. There was plenty to attract attention during the hour's wait. After a bit the carts with sand came rushing up and emptying their contents into the road, so as not to allow the Sultan to get jolted. Shortly after this the troops began to arrive. There were Lancers, Hussars, Albanian, Arabian and Turkish, only some of the troops were smart, although they all looked fine men. Just as we were beginning to get impatient, we heard a bugle and we knew that Abdul Hamid was coming at last."

"Ten seconds later the Sultan's carriage appeared through the gates. The soldiers stood at attention, and, as he passed, each regiment shouted out in Turkish 'Long live the Sultan.' His carriage was drawn by two horses and surrounded by soldiers. With the Sultan was Osman Pasha, who sat opposite him. The Sultan had a reddish beard and hair, and looked about five feet ten inches, and has a very worn-looking face and a nasty expression; he must be about sixty. Immediately he arrived at the Mosque, the Pashas began to salaam. When the Sultan got out of his carriage, he walked up the steps leading to the Mosque, and, as he was half-way up, he turned round and salaamed back. After the Sultan's

carriage came five landaus containing some of his wives. The ladies of the Harem were escorted by black and white eunuchs, the black ones being slaves. After having been in the Mosque about half-an-hour, the Sultan came out and got into a carriage drawn by two grey horses, which he now drove himself. All the courtiers and Pashas ran panting up the hill after the Sultan." (*Diary.*)

The German-built Baghdad Railway was making diplomatic history thirty-four years ago. Our friends advised us to make a cross-country journey to Smyrna through parts of Asia Minor rarely visited by strangers, instead of going by sea. We went by steamer to Mudania on the Sea of Marmora, then by train to Brusa, the ancient capital, and thence by carriage to the German Railway. Brusa was one of the most beautiful towns I have ever visited, and vines overhung the streets. After the heat of the day you could take Turkish baths in bathing rooms covered with blue and green Persian tiles, the shades of which would be the envy of the collector. After your bath you plunged into large pools of hot and cold water. It was bathing à la Arabian Nights. One almost expected a veiled houri to come beckoning to some inner chamber and to proffer a hookah (hubble-bubble).

Travelling off the beaten track in Asia Minor was even more uncomfortable than in the Caucasus. I have recollections of sleepless nights spent trying to avoid the hungry Turkish insect tribe, and listening to the plaintive howling of jackals in the distance. From Eski-shehr we went to inspect Sultan Abdul Hamid's Stud Farm at Mahmudieh between Eski-shehr and Angora. "The area of the whole stud is 800 square miles, and there are 1,200 horses as well as cattle, buffaloes, sheep, camels and angora goats. We sat down to a real Turkish meal, and to make the thing complete, we were waited on by the officers, as in Turkey the hosts always attend on their guests. We started with a sheep cooked whole, and as I was hungry, I took two helps not knowing that we were going to have five courses more as well as

fruit, all of them excellent and all of them Turkish : after a cup of coffee, we got into our carriages and drove out across the plain to the next station, Hamidieh, where there is also a Tartar village. On the way we passed several herds of angora goats ; they are lovely animals, with such beautiful long, silky hair. At Hamidieh we were again met by officers and treated to coffee ; it is always brought round by soldiers, and while we were drinking it they stood with their hands folded as a sign of respect." (*Diary*.)

We returned to civilisation by railway through Afium-Kara-Hissar to Smyrna. Thence we went by boat to Athens (Piraeus) and Marseilles. We arrived at the latter port on the 12th October, 1899. I find this entry in my diary : " After breakfast was over, we got yesterday's paper, and in it see that the Boers have sent us an ultimatum, saying that unless we take all our troops away, they will be at war with us in forty-eight hours, i.e., Wednesday evening, so *now* war must have started."

From Marseilles we returned to Ireland and I prepared myself for my visit to Germany by taking more German lessons in Dublin. It was a sad autumn. Week after week came news of British reverses. Would good news never come ? Even in 1899 there were many in Dublin who did not attempt to hide their pro-Boer sympathies. Our billiard-room became a kind of map-room, and on the table were spread out the latest maps of South Africa, on which we marked the position of the British forces with tiny Union Jacks. Everything about the war we read eagerly, and the newspaper *South Africa* with its bright yellow cover was a welcome weekly visitor, as was the *Spectator*. With sorrow I discarded an old friend in the shape of W. T. Stead's *Review of Reviews* because of its pro-Boer sympathies. It was three years before I again began to read the *Review*.

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE IN A SMALL GERMAN TOWN—1900

EARLY in 1900—I was then just 17—my parents sent me to Germany to learn German. Mr. Philip Williams, the Eton master, had recommended the name of a German family, where one young Englishman was made welcome. On a January afternoon I found myself clambering down the steps of an over-heated railway carriage at the little snow-bedecked town of Weilburg on the Lahn. On the platform I was met by the married daughter of my host, Herr Hofrat Hoelzgen, who was the local agent of the Grand Duke of Nassau. In his beautiful old sixteenth century castle I spent six happy months. I found myself in a strange world, quite unlike my native land. In the streets were lusty little boys, wearing fur caps and playing with sledges—a pastime I much envied. I was the only Englishman in this little town of three thousand Germans.

I had a very large bedroom, with a parquet floor, at the end of a long cold stone passage, but my room was kept nice and warm, thanks to a huge tiled stove in the corner, which was made up before I went to bed by Hoimann, the general factotum of the establishment, whose uniform bore the Ducal arms. In my bed-sitting-room I used to work three or four hours a day. From my window I looked down on the Castle court-yard and far below the river Lahn encircled the old town on three sides in a great silver loop. At nine I joined the family for breakfast, consisting of coffee and excellent rolls. My host, in a dressing gown, and my hostess and her daughter in *négligées*, did not dress properly till eleven.

After breakfast I took German lessons with a professor in the town. Our chief meal—*mittagessen*—was at 12.30 and consisted of soup, two meats, excellent vegetables and cheese or sweet, washed down by two

glasses of beer. In the afternoon I went for long walks, usually accompanied by my host's little dachshund Maenner, with a predilection for chasing cats, over the uplands to villages in the neighbourhood. There I got to know the German peasant—the salt of the earth. With a ravenous appetite I returned to tea—or, rather coffee—with the Frau Hofrätin, her married daughter, her granddaughter, and the green parrot, Löwerchen, whose German accent I tried to emulate. And over our coffee and “sandtorte” (a sponge cake that melted in your mouth) in my faltering German I tried to discuss world events.

My host and his family were very kind, and I soon felt quite at home, and in ordinary times I would have been entirely happy, but the times were not ordinary. The South African war was only three months old and an intensely patriotic and sensitive English boy felt very lonely during the first months of his stay, among people, who, whatever their outward politeness, were sympathising with his country's foes. There was gnawing anxiety at my heart as to the fate of the besieged garrisons at Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking.

For several months the war lay as a great shadow across my path. I did not know enough German to be able to hold my own in conversation, and with the aid of a dictionary I tried to follow the war news in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, but in a letter to my parents I wrote “of course I only believe the part that comes from London, the Brussels telegrams being nearly always untrue.” The moment in the day that I most looked forward to, was after lunch when I withdrew to my bedroom with my English papers, the *Daily Mail*, the *Spectator* and the new weekly, the *Sphere*, and felt among my own people.

Perhaps I was unduly depressed these first months because I had a succession of bad colds and constant nose-bleeding—a weakness which I only grew out of ten years later. The sympathy of the entire town was on the side of the Dutch. The Press portrayed the heroic little Republic of Dutch farmers fighting against the British Imperial Colossus. One evening my host's little grand-daughter of six was sitting on my knee and together

we were looking at an illustrated paper, containing photographs of the South African War. With her little finger she pointed at a picture and exclaimed, *Die bösen Engländer und die armen Boeren* (the wicked Englishmen and the poor Boers). Her mother at once told her she mustn't express such sentiments in my presence and I persuaded her to say in future *Die armen Engländer und die bösen Boeren* ! (the poor Englishmen and the wicked Boers).

My first really happy moment was when I received a telegram from my father on February 16th with the joyful words "Kimberley relieved." During the early part of my stay public opinion in Germany was sceptical as to an ultimate British victory, and in Weilburg only one of my friends, who had lived in England, was pro-British. Even reading the English papers was not an undiluted joy for there was news of "mishaps" in South Africa and bickerings in the House of Commons.

"After reading the speeches in the House, it seems to me that the debates are contemptible, as a rule the speakers seem so terribly wrapped up in *party* politics ; why isn't the Government sending out more troops ? Yes, of course, the Spion Kop affair was only a wise retreat but still it does seem rather bad losing 1,724 men with the only result that we crossed the Tugela and then had to come back again." (*Letter home.*)

"Buller has crossed the Tugela for the third time, please God he will succeed," (*Diary*) and three days later "Buller has had to recross the Tugela." (*Diary.*)

In March I wrote home : "With regard to German feeling towards us now, I think the upper classes see it is in their interests to keep friends with us, and I am quite sure the Kaiser does, at any rate till he gets the Navy that he is always talking about, but on the other hand there is no doubt that the sympathy of the German nation is with the Boers, owing to the reason, I firmly believe, that they know one side of the question." (*Diary*, March, 1900.)

On the day that Ladysmith was relieved I went with German officer friends to drink beer in the inn where Weilburg society used to assemble. Here, round a large table, fifteen to twenty of us would sit hour after hour

talking and sipping huge glasses of foaming iced beer, or, if in an extravagant mood, cooled Rhine wine in tapering glasses. On this particular evening my heart was beating with excitement and I found it difficult to hide my feelings. I shall never forget the kindness of my host's son, then Lieutenant Adolph Hoelzgen, my neighbour at table, who saw my excitement and entered into my patriotic joy.

On May 16th I wrote home: "In my German paper earlier in the week I read that Mafeking had fallen and that it was official! so you can imagine *how unhappy* I felt and this time I believed it because the paper gave it as a *Daily Mail* telegram. The truth of the matter, I found out later, was that the *Daily Mail* correspondent had sent a wire, in which he had said that there were a great many rumours flying about and gave an instance of one—'I had the luck to capture Colonel Baden-Powell and the whole Garrison of Mafeking to-day signed Snyman'!! In Wiesbaden three days later, where I first saw the Kaiser, driving along the Wilhelmstrasse, the news doubly welcome now came that Mafeking was relieved and I walked along with my head in the air humming "Soldiers of the Queen." German public opinion began now to veer round and I obtained a pamphlet in German, written by a Swiss professor giving the British point of view, which I distributed among my German friends.

As British prospects improved, and as my German became more fluent I settled down into the peaceful and contented existence of an inhabitant of Weilburg. I made many friends. I only spoke about the war to intimates and my German friends were careful never to say anything in my presence that would hurt my feelings. My daily routine of lessons and long walks was occasionally broken by visits to the theatre. There were also occasional social gatherings, a reception on the Kaiser's birthday, dances and *Fastnacht* (Pre-Lent) festivities.

A red letter occasion was when I was first invited by the teachers at the local gymnasium to join them at a "Swine or slaughter feast." A pig was killed in the morning and fourteen of us, assembled in the evening under the hospitable roof of the Frankfurter Hof. Here

we sat for five hours drinking beer and consuming various portions of the poor pig's carcase. We started with Metzel soup, then pork and bacon with *sauerkraut* and potatoes, then liver and blood sausages (I am glad to see from my diary that I omitted this item of the menu), then other forms of pig flesh, terminating with apple *compote*. Perhaps my dislike of pork dates from that period of my life.

"I was introduced to a great number of young ladies at my first dance. At first I made rather a fool of myself, by shaking hands when introduced to them, and I found out later that it is not the custom to shake hands here on introduction at a dance, only to bow." (*Diary*.) It was a proud moment when I was first saluted by a German officer but before long I took such courtesies as part of the daily round.

"You would be amused if you saw me taking off my hat with a swoop, in response to the salutes of my officer friends or drawing myself up, bowing and clicking my heels when introduced to anyone." (*Letter home*.) Early in my stay I realised the advantages of personal contact between peoples, my ignorance of German customs was as great as that of some of my untravelled German friends about British conditions. On one occasion a prominent citizen of Weilburg asked "if the English ladies did not consume large quantities of whisky daily."

In 1900 Weilburg was peaceful and prosperous. To my eyes Germany had few problems and the people led happy if uneventful lives. Prussian rule was not popular and I heard at first hand of the war of 1866, for my host had been an officer in the Nassau army and had fought against Prussia. Among the celebrities of Weilburg, was a man who went to England and became bandmaster in one of the Highland regiments, returning to his native town to end his days. Belief in the benefits of conscription seemed general, many of my friends thought that Great Britain ought to adopt it. I was told by one man "I have seen clowns of peasants go into the Army and come out smart men, it is a kind of university of the masses."

The cult of cleanliness was not so universal in 1900 as it is

to-day. In our castle there was no bath. I was considered slightly eccentric because I insisted on going down to the town Badeanstalt (bath house) and indulging in the luxury of a weekly bath. One friend remonstrated with me and said in the winter he never washed below his waist-line!

When spring came I joined the tennis club and every day I passed a couple of happy hours with the leading lights in Weilburg society. Tennis fever was then carrying all before it in Central Europe and scoring in English was the hall-mark of the chic—the only English words I ever heard in the town. Many romances must have started at the Tennis Platz for the youth and beauty came here to enjoy the company of the officers. I was always sorry for the latter as in those days they used to play tennis in their smart uniforms, with tight collars, only discarding their swords before coming on to the court.

The postcard rage was at its height and everyone sent postcards to friends. When we went for excursions in the neighbourhood our first objective was the local beer-garden and having slaked our thirst we proceeded to send *ansichts-karten* to all and sundry. The waiter at the leading inn at Weilburg told me that on Sundays he would sell as many as 250 postcards.

Perhaps my happiest memories are of cycling expeditions over the uplands of the beautiful Taunus region and through the valleys of the Rhineland. Most week-ends, when the weather improved, were spent in this way, and I explored remote villages and forests where Englishmen were unknown. My love for German forests and the German countryside, which has never left me, dates from this year and I have rarely wandered in German forests alone, far from the haunts of men, without drawing inspiration from them.

In 1900 there was undoubtedly a certain contempt for Great Britain in Germany. We were regarded by many as an effete nation, that had witnessed its best days. The hard-working Germans considered that we were "sport mad." Their merchants and traders returned from the far parts of the world with bulging order books. These orders

were often obtained at the expense of the more happy-go-lucky Englishman, who did not study his customer's requirements, nor speak his language as the German invariably did. Life in Germany in those days was a curious experience for a young Englishman. He found a nation obsessed by the consciousness of its destiny, as the greatest nation in the world. What nation could withstand German brains, German culture, German persistence and finally if "the day" came—German arms on sea and land?

Germany with customary thoroughness had begun the task of inculcating patriotism in the minds of the young. I had many opportunities for studying the methods of the German Navy League, an organisation which at that time had a membership of a million, with branches in every town and village. From the wayside Gasthaus in Bavaria to the fashionable hotel in Berlin the magazines and literature of the *Flotten Verein* (Navy League) were to be found. The efforts of our Navy League seemed tame in comparison. Every device of propaganda was used to stimulate the interest of the German nation in the German Fleet. In the early spring of 1900, when the cherry trees along the banks of the Rhine were a mass of blossom, a flotilla of torpedo boats was being fêted. The flotilla made a few hours' stay at every little town. Patriotic displays in honour of the officers and men were arranged and the citizens of each town vied with their neighbours in loyal fervour. On one occasion I was passing a town bedecked with bunting in which the inhabitants were in holiday attire. I asked the reason and was told that the sailors were being entertained to a mid-day feast at the town hall. I saw a copy of the menu and was surprised to find that asparagus was given to every member of the crew.

Germany had all the confidence of successful youth. Her rise to prosperity and world fame had been meteoric. Except America, no country could show such a record of advance in the previous half-century. The territorial extension to the North in Schleswig-Holstein at the expense of the Danes, the defeat of Austria in the campaign of 1866, the French débâcle in the Franco-

Prussian War, the consolidation of the Reich by Bismarck, the establishment of the German Colonial Empire in the 'eighties, in East and South West Africa, and in the Pacific, the triumph of German industry in all quarters of the globe, the capturing of the blue ribbon of the Atlantic by German shipping were facts which could not be disputed. It was a formidable list. Was it any wonder that Germany thought that the ball was at her feet, and that before long she would be undisputed arbiter of Europe's fate? The colonies of Portugal and other territories were like ripe fruit waiting to fall into her lap.

Up to the outbreak of the War I paid many visits to Germany and from my last visit in 1912 I returned home with a heavy heart. My German friends were more confident than ever that Germany's growing trade and colonial interests demanded a navy second to none. If England considered she must have a large navy to safeguard her oversea interests, was there anything remarkable in the fact, they asked, that Germany wished to do the same? There was not a port East of Suez in which the German black, white and red flag was not to be seen. If German trade and wealth expanded as it was doing it would not be many years before British trade and British tonnage occupied a second place in many of the world's harbours. The British Empire was beginning to crumble, probably the three great nations of the future would be Germany, with Portugal and Holland, and their colonies in the Teutonic orbit, the United States of America and Russia. All Germany had to do was to sit tight. If that shot had not been fired at the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo on June 28th, 1914, by Gavrilo Princep, and Germany had bided her time, she might have attained her object by peaceful means.

When I returned from my eight months in Germany in the Autumn of 1900 it was with a very great affection for the country and for my German friends, with a sincere admiration for German efficiency, but with an uncomfortable

sensation that some day German opposition might interfere with the development of the British Empire. In some moods I wondered whether there could not be an Anglo-German understanding to divide the unallotted parts of the world into British and German spheres of influence.

PICTURE POSTCARDS

1900—1904

CHAPTER IX

A BOY PUBLISHER

THE Passion Play at Oberammergau in 1900 made a deep impression on me. The peasant actors were unspoilt. They lived their parts. Anton Lang, who had succeeded to the rôle of Christus, might have had his head turned. His carving shop was thronged with sight-seers and autograph hunters. He had a pleasant word, a dignified smile for everyone. To act the chief rôle was to him evidently a real spiritual experience. He accepted the fame which had come to him on his knees. He refused to be lionised. I left Oberammergau spiritually invigorated.

My mother wished to "do" a cure at Karlsbad, so my sister and I spent three weeks in that pleasant Bohemian watering-place. We then made our way to Prague and to the Sächsische Schweiz (Saxon Switzerland) just over the Austrian frontier. I was beginning to feel restless. I had been eight months on the continent. I wished I could find some really congenial work, that would keep me in touch with Europe and foreign languages. Becoming a diplomat seemed so far off. My enthusiasm for a diplomatic career was waning. I had seen our embassies and legations in various countries. The life was not nearly as exciting as I had pictured it. There was too much "Society" in it. After passing a stiff examination, in four years' time I would merely become a junior third secretary, with little chance of displaying initiative. Just a glorified clerk. Besides, my father would not now be able to afford the allowance of four hundred a year that was essential. I had often read about young men who struck out for themselves. Why should I not do something spectacular? Start a business and make sufficient money to go into Parliament and become *the* great expert on Empire

matters? One day I left my mother and sister at the hotel at Schandau and went by steamer to Herrnskretchen on the Elbe. I went for a four hours' walk through valley and forest to Gr. Winterberg, from the view tower there I got a fine panorama of the surrounding country. I was looking down on Austria and Germany. What a wonderful world it was, how good to be alive and seventeen, with your career ahead of you.

I came down from my tower and wrote a couple of picture postcards. Postcards had played quite an important part in my life since I came abroad. Wherever I went, I wrote postcards to my friends. Why was it that the Germans were ahead of us in so many things—taximeters on the cabs, better cake-shops, lovely out-of-door restaurants, cleaner towns, excellent printing, and then, of course, postcards? The German postcards were very well produced. I wondered how many picture postcards I had sent in the eight months, certainly a couple of hundred. How many postcards were sold in Germany every year? If every German used as many postcards as I did, the total must run into several thousand millions—probably something like 4,000,000,000. The German postcard publishers must make a very good thing of it—how unenterprising English firms were, you hardly ever saw really good postcards in England—not to be compared with the German. But then in Great Britain the sending through the post of a full-sized oblong postcard had only recently been made legal—till then you could only send those little ridiculous square-shaped cards, no good for printing views on.

Would British people ever buy postcards like they did abroad? Why shouldn't they? British people when they were on the continent bought postcards just like the "natives." Sooner or later the postcard craze would spread to England. Some enterprising firm would make a fortune in it. Lucky devils. How nice it it would be to be rich and do what you wished and go where you wanted—but why shouldn't I be that lucky person? Absurd idea—a boy starting to sell postcards and trying to teach his elders to suck eggs—but why not?

I was in Saxony, the country where most of the postcards in the world were printed. What luck! Why not find out all about it here? Why not?

The next day I told my mother and my sister of my idea. My sister and I went for a long walk to Hochstein, where there was another widespread view of the surrounding country—a fine place for enthusing. I enthused. My family backed me up. They were sure that I had struck oil. The next day we went to Dresden by steamer on the Elbe—a very pleasant trip, but I had little time for the passing scenery. My mind was absorbed in working out the details of my scheme. I would publish the best series of postcards in England, I would select only the best photographs, I would employ the most up-to-date methods of salesmanship, I would introduce these revolving postcard stands which I had seen in continental shops, I would devise special packets, I would have novel show-cards, I would get a striking trade-mark designed—just how did one start a business? Never mind, I would soon find out. My brain was humming, what a pity my father was not here to consult. What would his reaction be? Would he urge caution, or would he be as enthusiastic as my mother and sister?

The next day my mother sent this telegram to my father in Ireland:—

“Evelyn sees business opening wish you would join us to advise wire reply Charlotte.”

The same evening this reply was received:—

“Shall be with you Wednesday or before.”

During the days of waiting I went round to see the leading printing firms at Dresden and Leipzig. I visited the British Consulate to ascertain if there was any duty. The information I gathered only strengthened my conviction that my scheme was sound. I ascertained that if I ordered 25,000 postcards at a time, they would only cost 13/6 per thousand plus freight and of course the copyright fee. As postcards were sold at a penny each,

that left a nice margin of profit. I would presumably have to charge the dealers half-price, but that would leave me with a clear pound a thousand, or a farthing on every card. The men who made fortunes were the men who catered for the million. The four days till my father's arrival dragged—could time pass so slowly? When I was not interviewing printers and publishers, I fitted in some sight-seeing with my mother and sister. "We sat twenty minutes before Raphael's Sistine Madonna in the Zwinger Gallery," I wrote. "It is marvellous and is the most beautiful picture in the world, as G. F. Watts says." Two days later, in intervals between appointments with printers at Leipzig "as I was not far from the Battlefield of the Nations, I went up to the Napoleonstein and saw the Museum with his souvenirs, his razors, a cheque of Wellington's, his hand-writing." (*Diary.*)

My father was as good as his word and four days later he was with us. He arrived after midnight, but we must not disturb him till half-past seven. I hardly slept that night. "We all went into F.'s room in our dressing-gowns," I wrote in my diary. "He was still in bed. We had a great talk and he really is marvellously good about it and has entered into the whole scheme." How wonderful to have a father like that, who agreed that his son might go into business on his own before he was eighteen. The die was cast. My future was decided on in family conclave. We arrived in London on the following Sunday morning. I was glad it was Sunday. We went to Westminster Abbey. I prayed that success might crown my efforts. "It was a glorious service," I wrote, "the choir sang beautifully." My father could only stay in London for a couple of days, but my mother remained behind for a month, to keep me company till my scheme was launched.

We spent a happy month in lodgings at 88-90 Ebury Street, kept by a Mr. Spicer, who had been in private service, and was now a leading councillor in the Borough. "We get the very best of food. It is just like a private house and there are even silver salt-cellars." (*Diary.*) Mr.

Spicer was my guide, philosopher and friend, and, after my mother left, tried to keep me in the straight and narrow path. He advised me which of my friends I should avoid and which I should cultivate. Mr. Spicer had no side, and frequently waited at table, and when my mother left a month later she knew I was in good hands.

During the four weeks we "did" London thoroughly with a Baedeker. I wanted to see all the chief sights so that I might learn at first hand what the prospects of selling postcards were. The Tower, Westminster Abbey, Kensington Palace, Hampton Court, the Galleries, the British Museum, Windsor Castle—we went to them all. We saw ten-pound notes being printed at the Bank of England, sovereigns minted from liquid gold at the Royal Mint. We visited the Dogs and Cats Home at Battersea, and saw the lethal chamber where the poor inmates ended their days, we went to the Docks, "we went by the new Twopenny Tube, it is a marvellous affair" (*Diary*), we went to an afternoon service at St. Paul's and heard the Bishop of Stepney* preach on slums, we visited one of Lord Rowton's Houses for the down-and-outs, we went to Eton, we went to Harrow.

I was not very enthusiastic over my first visit to Harrow. "It has a splendid position on a hill. The buildings are nice, but new," my diary records. "The boys are very unsmart compared with Eton. We had tea and heard 'Bill' being called. Francis is a very nice little boy and I gave him 5/-." Francis Yeats-Brown† was my first cousin and destined for a military career. I enjoyed the importance of being a grown-up and giving tips to boys at school. Francis was four years my junior. His father was with us. He heard of my largesse and said he was sure I had no money to spare—which was true. The next day when my uncle left for Genoa, where he was British Consul, he gave me a tip of a pound. It was a case of virtue rewarded, but wasn't it rather *infra dig* to accept tips, when you were starting business on your own? I think it was the last tip I ever got.

* Now the Bishop of London.

† The author of *Bengal Lancer*, to whom I owe a special debt of gratitude. He read *Uphill* in its original form and on his advice I largely rewrote it.

There were, however, other more serious preoccupations than sight-seeing, even if the sight-seeing was usually done with an eye to business. My actual career as a postcard publisher started on the day after our return from Germany, when my father escorted me to see the art editor of *Country Life*, Mr. H. Pratt, who in the early days gave me much useful advice about the best photographers and how to obtain the pictures I required. "Mr. Pratt has promised to help me to get pictures," I wrote, "though personally he thinks the scheme will not succeed." A month later I am glad to find that "Mr. Pratt told F. that he had revised his opinion and thought I would succeed."

Within a week of my visit to Mr. Pratt we selected the first twenty-five photographs for the Wrench Series, and I sent them, with full instructions, by registered post to the printers at Dresden. I wanted to "buy British," but I found that in the matter of collotype printing at low rates, Germany was far ahead of us. Nevertheless, I subsequently placed an order at nearly double the price with an English firm, but the work was inferior. A year later, with the help of Mr. W. H. Spottiswoode, I managed to get some of the work done in England. By now I had to suspend my sight-seeing, as business took up all my time. I went to Coutts to open a banking account, although there was nothing to bank for two or three months. I was somewhat overawed by the frock-coats of the staff. I became friends with the head of the overdraft department, who was also a keen amateur photographer, with whom for several years I had many transactions!

The all-important question of headquarters for my activities was the next problem. A Postcard Publisher must obviously have an office. I was shown into the partner's sanctuary at a house-agent's. On the glass-door was his name, and the word "Private" was painted in large alarming-looking letters on white frosted glass. He looked over his spectacles. "What did I want?" The reluctant office-boy had only let me in because I insisted that I must see the head of the firm. I asked for details

of premises in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly. Certainly, there were plenty, but if I was a minor, I must have a banker's guarantee. Tiresome matters like this were soon arranged, and in due course I showed my father the first floor of No. 20 Haymarket, above the premises of W. H. Philpot, the tailor, now pulled down and occupied by Burberry's large building. My father approved, and the floor, consisting of two inter-communicating rooms, was taken at a rental of £90 per annum. For the first four weeks I was alone in my glory. Most of the day I was out of the office. There was my solicitor to see, the arrangements to be made about the telephone, furniture to buy at Maples—including a managerial chair which tipped back and revolved on its axis—linoleum to be laid, electric fittings to be chosen, a counter, complete with till, to be erected in the back-room, pigeon-holes for the postcards to be put up, a typewriter and piles of account books to be bought, commercial visiting cards, the size of a cigarette case, to be printed.

My "official" visiting cards arrived before the firm had opened its doors:

"E. WRENCH, POSTCARD PUBLISHERS,
20 HAYMARKET, LONDON, S.W.
Telegraphic address: 'Guinivere London.'"

My married sister had called one of her children by this name. It was Tennysonian. The Post Office approved—there was no other "Guinivere" in the official list of telegraphic addresses. I kept a large supply of these cards in my waistcoat pocket. I was longing to use them. I soon had plenty of opportunities, when I started on "the road."

I must have a trade-mark. That was certain. You couldn't be a postcard publisher if you hadn't a trade mark. How must I set about it? Friends mentioned something about patent-agents. I had never heard about such people. I prowled about the purlieus of Chancery Lane and soon found a friendly man who was as much at home in the world of inventions, patents and trade marks as I was

in the Haymarket. I suggested the one obvious trade mark for one of my name, a spanner or wrench—within three years this little “wrench” had appeared on millions and millions of postcards. Now that the first consignment of postcards was on the machines, the next thing to think about was selling them.

I went round to several public galleries and institutions. I was regarded with mild astonishment. “It is very hard getting anything done in these Government places” was my entry after my first visit. Red-tape and officialdom were serious things and youthful enthusiasts must learn patience. A week later I had a stroke of luck. I wanted to get my postcards sold in the palaces and buildings controlled by the Office of Works. I went down to



Storey's Gate, trembling. The messengers were awe-inspiring. Had I an appointment? No. But could I see Lord Esher's private secretary? Stanley Quick had known what it was to visit high officials. He sympathised with an apprehensive youth. At the Office of Works, they were accustomed to all and sundry, but a public-schoolboy selling postcards was a novelty. He would ask his chief. In a couple of minutes I was in Lord Esher's presence. I can never forget his kindness. He was an old Etonian—if Etonians did not stand together, who would?

During subsequent weeks red-tape was cut through, and thanks to Lord Esher the Wrench Series were soon on sale at Hampton Court, Holyrood, Kensington and Linlithgow Palaces, and Carisbrooke Castle. I had pulled off my first coup. I had got confidence. I subsequently got permission from the authorities at the National Gallery and Westminster Abbey, and Lord Esher gave me a letter to dear old General Milman at the Tower, who, as luck would have it, was also an “O.E.”—*Floreat Etona*. I

thanked Providence that my father had sent me to Eton and not to Winchester, which was nearly my fate.

QUEEN'S HOUSE,
TOWER OF LONDON,
E.C.

Nov. 1, 1900.

DEAR LORD E.

I will do what I can for your young friend "Mr. Evelyn Wrench," who brought me your note this morning.

I have asked him to bring me the proofs of the cards he proposes for sale in the Tower, as soon as they are ready.

I shall be glad to be able to give a lift to one of the Old School, and I think raised his hopes by showing him *Fasti Etonenses* by Arthur Christopher Benson, in which I have been interested, as it takes in the happy time I spent there. Ancient history to him, if not to yourself.

V. t. y.

BRYAN MILMAN.

So far my experiences had been amusing. Now life began in earnest. I saw my mother off to Ireland at Euston on November 8. On getting back to my rooms from the office I wrote "It is rather lonely." (*Diary*.) I hated my Sundays. The mornings were all right because I went to church. "It is very lonely," I wrote in my diary, "especially when I have nothing to do." I knew very few people in London. I dreaded the week-ends those first months. By the spring I had made friends and used to spend most of the week-ends in the country. My first consignment of postcards would be arriving in two or three weeks' time. I must get busy, so I started walking up and down the chief streets in London, making a careful list of likely customers, to whom I would go as soon as the supplies arrived. It was no use calling on the trade without samples.

On dull November days trudging along the streets was depressing work. Everyone else seemed so busy and confident. Even the human-hair merchant in Baker Street looked occupied and prosperous. I peered into shop-windows, into old-clothes and live-stock dealers, stamp merchants, second-hand bookshops, I envied all those people who had *running* businesses. But they must

have started some time, or at least their fathers or grand-fathers had. One Saturday I was doing my survey of the Paddington district. I had just walked up the Edgware Road, and was going along Praed Street to Westbourne Grove, note-book in hand. I saw a number of hansoms with fellows I had known at Eton, going down to Eton for the week-end. Why was I doing this job? Suppose the whole thing failed? How did I know that people wanted postcards? But it was lunch-time, perhaps that was why I was feeling depressed! So I went into the nearest A.B.C. On the marble-topped table, over my beef rissole, toast and butter, I wrote out neatly my list of likely customers.

When would my first consignment of postcards arrive? I was getting tired of preparations. Making plans and lists became monotonous. I was tremendously anxious to get going. My cards had been promised for the middle of November—why weren't they here? Had printers no consciences? I felt powerless. Saxony seemed a long way off. I sent my first wire to my printers on November 14. I spent an anxious afternoon in my office waiting for the reply. The boards of my floor were still bare, the linoleum was to be laid to-morrow. Every time I walked across the floor I made a great noise. I am sure Mr. Philpot downstairs, fitting his customers, must have cursed me. There was a knock on the door, I rushed to get the wire: "Delivery end of week," only four days to wait. The next morning I went to Coutts and sent off the cheque to the printers, so that there could be no possibility of delay. I presumed that "end of week" would mean Monday.

It would be quite safe to go out of town for the week-end. Therefore I went down to stay with my friends, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Head, at Shoreham, Sussex. "We spent the morning shooting rabbits and hares. We drove the covers with beagles. Our bag was twenty-five rabbits and four hares. I shot three of the former." (*Diary.*) I wonder that my hand was steady enough to shoot anything. My mind was far from the Sussex Downs. I was wondering just at what spot in Central Europe that precious

packing case was. By any awful chance could the printers have been better than their word and the postcards have been brought round to No. 20 in my absence? It was Saturday, and the whole place was closed down in the afternoon. Anyhow I would go up by the early train on Monday morning.

Monday. There were two letters from Dresden. I eagerly tore them open. My diary says: "They were gassing about full stops." The meticulous German proof-reader was not going to pass anything till he was quite sure. Did I want a comma or a full stop after the word "Embankment" on the left side of the picture showing the Thames and Cleopatra's Needle? If there had been long distance telephones in those days, I wonder what I would have said to my printer. All I could do was to send another wire. The following day "I got a reassuring wire that the cards would be here on Thursday, the day after to-morrow." (*Diary*.) Thursday came. No cards, only a line from the printers saying they were still waiting instructions. How could anyone be so inhuman? I sent another long wire and my diary records that "I wrote to the Printers." I would like to see that letter. Another week-end to get through. Lord and Lady Esher invited me down to Orchard Lea near Windsor. "After lunch on Sunday Lord Esher and I drove over to Windsor and we went over the Queen's stables and saw her donkeys. Talked about kiosks. Lord E. wants to erect some kiosks in the parks and in various parts of London, and wants me to run the scheme for him." Kiosks acted as a counter-irritant to cards. I forgot my anxieties.

The cards must be here at latest by Tuesday morning. I rang up Brasch & Rothenstein, the continental carriers.

"Who are you?"

"Wrench, the Postcard Publishers."

"RANCH—"

"No. W.R.E.N.C.H. W for wasp, R for Robert, E for Edward—"

"Wait a minute. I'll get someone."

"What do you want, please?"

"Have the goods despatched from Dresden on Saturday arrived?"

"Which goods? Have you no advice note number?"

"No."

"Very sorry—no advice so far. Ring up to-morrow."

Next morning, Wednesday, the first entry in my diary reads: "Talked to Brasch & Rothenstein on the telephone." On Thursday I decided that telephoning was no good. I went round early to Fore Street in the City. I had never been there before. It was full of vans and packing-cases. I went to Brasch & Rothenstein's warehouse. I saw more packing-cases, most of them from Germany, than I had ever seen before in my life—my case was not there. But the clerk was sympathetic. He saw the extreme urgency of the matter. He was reassuring, my consignment would probably be in the next lot coming up from the docks that afternoon. I arranged with him that a special van must be chartered—expense was no object. He gave his word. I went to lunch in Soho to celebrate the occasion. "Had a marvellous lunch at the D'Italie for 1/6." (*Diary*.) But what if after all they didn't come? As the White Queen in "Alice," said, "jam to-morrow but never jam to-day." How could I know for certain? I went round to the Stores to buy some files and a book to keep newspaper cuttings in, one must look ahead. I rang up the Carriers at 3.30. Had consignment No. 500 arrived "Eil-gut" (Express Goods) from Dresden? Yes, it was on its way from the Docks and would be specially delivered before we closed.

"At 5.5 the Cards arrived. They were beautifully printed. I walked on air." (*Diary*, November 29th, 1900.)

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Things were moving. My office was ready. I was making headway with my typing. I informed a friend in a letter that: "I also use the four-finger method, keeping the thumb only for the space-board." The new bell, that rang every time the door to the back-office was

opened, was in working order. The top of the counter had been polished, the till-drawer closed smoothly, but there was one gap which must be filled. I had no office-boy. Publishers must have office boys. So far I had been my own office boy. I had kept "Petty Cash." I had entered the Post Book to show where the letters went. I had answered the 'phone. I had pressed the letters in the letter book in the copying-press. I could now copy letters so that there was hardly any smudge. When I was out "on the road" selling cards, or bicycling round on my new Raleigh to see people, there should always be someone at the office to answer enquiries. I dined with a cousin, George Macan, who ran a Boys' Club. A Londoner of Irish descent named Conolly was engaged that evening.

On Monday, December 3, Conolly arrived for duty and reported to his boss, who was there to let him in. It was important that from the start I should assert my authority—even if a difference of two and a half years in age was not much, Conolly must be taught to be deferential. He must call his superior officer "Sir," he must be polite to all callers. They might be possible customers. Service must be our motto, as soon as there was anyone to serve. Conolly was as meek as a new boy at school those first days. For a couple of months Conolly and I composed the staff. When no one was about, I let down my defences and sometimes we had tea together—sometimes as a treat roast chestnuts. Apart from the usual duties of an office boy, one of Conolly's chief jobs was to keep the stock tidy, to see that Postcard No. 19 did not get into Box No. 21. The book-keeping in the early days was not very onerous, when I came in from my rounds, I entered up the Day Book, and the Ledger. A friend had explained the mysteries of "double entry."

A day in my life would be something like this. I bicycled from my rooms in Ebury Street, getting to the office at 9.30. Conolly was punctual, unlike many of his breed. I opened the post, gave instructions to the "staff" and then went out to tout for orders, usually lunching at an A.B.C. near to where I was working. If I was

especially hard up, I would go to a branch of the British Tea Table Company, because Pearce & Plenty in those days provided you with two poached eggs on toast for 5d., a penny less than the A.B.C. As "follow" I would have a scone and butter and sometimes jam. A total of 11d. or 1/-. No poached eggs or any eggs in after life have tasted half as good. Trying to make reluctant people order goods they did not want was a hungry job.

Ever since those days I have had a great sympathy with commercial travellers. No one who has not been "on the road" can understand the trials of a salesman. The members of an indoor staff may have drudgery, but they know nothing of the snubs and humiliations the "Commercial" has to face and keep smiling. After seventeen years of training, and after ordination, the Jesuit is put back into a sort of second noviceship of sterner discipline before taking up his life's work. St. Ignatius Loyola knew what he was about.

Providence could not have discovered a better training for an Etonian, who had enjoyed luxury and who had kind and indulgent parents. If I had my way, every public school-boy would have a year's training in commercial life as office boy and then as a junior commercial traveller. He would learn more about life in these months than he had in the years at his "Alma mater." When I was "travelling" for orders, I became just the "man from Wrench's"—it would never do if important Mr. Smith, the leading stationer in Victoria Street, thought the firm was a one-man show and the boss had to do his own canvassing. I received an order—true only for 3/6's worth of cards—in the first shop I ever went into with my sample case, Messrs. T. Rastall & Sons, Ebury Street—a good omen.

Some days I would have a run of luck; other days, it might have been the weather or my liver, I was not in so resilient a mood, I drew blank. I walked right down the King's Road or Cheapside—not an order. What unsympathetic people stationers were. After half-a-dozen unsuccessful calls I would develop an "inferiority complex," I began to lose confidence in myself. I would stop outside the door, I looked inside, they were all busy

behind the counter, there were several customers in the shop. Perhaps I had better wait. It was very mortifying to be snubbed before people.

Could I see Mr. Smith? "Very sorry, he is too busy to-day, come back on Tuesday week." "Mr. Smith is sorry, he gets all the cards he wants from Tucks." "We only deal in coloured cards," or "Not this morning, thank you." "But, Miss, might I just see the boss for a minute? I have something special to show him, I am sure he would be interested."

"Miss" began to relent. I put a world of feeling into my eyes. "Miss" went to see. I had got through the barrage. When I had women to deal with, I usually found that, although stationers or booksellers, they remained human beings. I emerged with an order in my manifold book. I went for my next victim with assurance.

Selling requires tremendous reserves of confidence and control. I constantly thought of M. Ritz' instructions to his staff: "*Messieurs les clients n'ont jamais tort.*" However humble or ill-mannered the shop-keeper might be, I was the under-dog—I was the salesman. If he was occupied, it was my job to stand aside, till he could pay attention to me. I must have a soothing phrase on my tongue, "Yes, Sir," "No, Sir," "I will see what I can do, Sir." None of your Eton or Oxford superior manners here.

I rarely made calls in the afternoon. When I returned to No. 20, elated or depressed according to my luck, I dealt with the day's correspondence and typed my letters "We are in receipt of your favour of the blank inst. which shall have immediate attention. Trusting we shall have the favour of your esteemed patronage, We are, dear Sirs, yours faithfully." The afternoons were not as monotonous as they sound. There were unexpected callers. A further consignment of goods from the printers—Conolly and I would go downstairs to the passage running parallel with Philpot's shop, and there undo the packing case. Philpot was angry. His customers were complaining. I was driving business away. He had let the first floor as an office not as a warehouse. I

was sorry but what could I do? I must unpack my postcards. "Oh, very well, but do be quick about it." Conolly and I tried our best not to make much noise, but breaking open packing-cases with a jemmy is not a silent job, and you can't help stumping upstairs, if you have five or six thousand postcards in your arms.

Once the postcards were safely disposed of in their racks, they had to be sorted out into envelopes bearing the name of the firm and the inscription in large letters "The Wrench Series, a universal series of high-class views, kept by the principal stationers in the United Kingdom." Was this strictly true?

"Let's see, how many customers have we, Conolly, twenty-seven?"

"But we must make a start, and I suppose that's what is called a white lie."

Although we did not attempt to do any retail trade, stray customers occasionally came our way. One of the first was a German. "To-day I was in a stationer's, when a lady asked the attendant," I wrote home, "if he spoke German, of course he did not, but I said I did. She asked if I knew where she could get *Ansichtspostkarten* (Picture Postcards). I told her at No. 20 Haymarket. I rushed back and got out twelve or fourteen of my London cards and met her at the door with them. I wanted to give them to her, but she insisted on paying. I finally dropped the shilling into the till. She was very nice and was staying at the Carlton Hotel."

Some evenings, when trade was bad, prospects gloomy and Philpot unnecessarily complaining, I cycled to Ebury Street feeling very depressed. Why had I become a Postcard Publisher? Anyhow, in the Diplomatic Service I would have been among my own class, I would not have become a clerk and canvasser rolled into one. What was the use of having had a good education? Trying to make your fortune was not as easy as it had seemed. There was that Jew fellow I talked to at lunch. He had been on the road for ten years.

He told me he never got depressed: "You soon get through that, you wait till you have my experience, m'lad."

Was I really made of the stuff successful business men were made of? Could I ever grow a shell that would make me indifferent to snubs? And even, say I could, and became like him, I didn't want to be a traveller in five or ten years' time. I wanted to be the head of a big business, and in a large office with a thick pile carpet, and with a row of bells which I would press when I wanted to see a deferential secretary or sub-manager. Jobs like selling postcards would be done by underlings. During dinner I forgot my woes talking to Hans, Mr. Spicer's German waiter. He had come over to England to learn English. Was he lonely? Well, rather. I was sorry for Hans, we talked about his dear Rhineland. I felt better after dinner. Anyhow I was working in my own country.

My first really big order was for 50,000 cards from a wholesale firm in the North of England. There was jubilation in the office that morning. Conolly and I risked Philpot's ire and danced an Irish jig on my linoleum-covered sloping floor. Sure enough, Newman, Philpot's assistant came up to expostulate, but what matter, the dream was coming true. I promised "the sound like stamping with feet shouldn't happen again." I don't think it did, because we soon became grand and I had a red carpet in the "principal's" room. But no subsequent grandeur ever quite made up for that empty lino-covered room in the early days with only a table, a couple of chairs and my typewriter. The only drawback about that particular order was that the terms of payment were rather protracted: "One month and a six months' bill." What were bills? I had never met any before, the only kind of bills I knew were tailor's bills, but this was something different—"a promissory note." Your customer gave you a slip of paper with a red Inland Revenue stamp on it, looking very legal, and when it arrived you gave it to your bank and they advanced money on it. Seven months seemed a long time to wait for your money, when you had to pay cash to your printers. Never mind. Business was business.

By the Christmas holidays I was accustomed to my new life. I was in the "trade," and "trade" terms no longer seemed strange. Orders were beginning to arrive, and once we had a larger range of subjects, business would be good.

As my motto I adopted the line from Shakespeare :

"Have I not here the best cards ? "

and even if I had not, I was determined to make the Wrench Series second to none as soon as possible. I put my first advertisement in a Trade paper and received by return requests for samples. One lady wrote : "I am enclosing a penny stamp 'to have the superiority of Wrench's postcards' proved, as offered in the *Picture Postcard*. I hope you are publishing some good cards of Bradford—they are needed." Another enquirer wrote : "I have seen your announcement of a new publication of picture postcards in the *P.P.C. Magazine*. I shall be very grateful if you give us some really good Edinburgh cards. Up to now the cards representing the most beautiful city of the North have been most disappointing. I have been doing a good deal of foreign exchanging and really have not been able to get any *good* cards to send."

The customers were evidently there, if only one could ensure a regular supply of the right cards.

When I returned from my brief Christmas holiday, Conolly was very pleased to see me. "He has got several orders during my absence," I wrote home, "... the real problem now is to get cards, more cards." The number of my friends was growing. I no longer suffered from loneliness. Lord Esher's secretary, Stanley Quick, took an increasing interest in the business, and he and Henry Stead, W. T. Stead's son, became junior partners. It was good to have friends to consult.

In January I left Ebury Street and went to live with my friend, Christopher Head* and his two brothers, Geoffrey and Frank, as "paying lodger" at their comfortable house in Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park. I remained at Clarence Terrace four and a half years, and much enjoyed the comfort of my new surroundings. The Heads

* Subsequently drowned on the *Titanic*.

were very kind to me and I had a standing invitation to go down for the week-end, when I felt so inclined, to their parents' house at Shoreham. No more lonely evenings or week-ends in lodgings.

One of my first important ventures in the new year was to go and see Captain R. F. Scott* of the *Discovery* at Burlington House. He was then completing his plans for his first Antarctic Expedition. If I could get out a series of twelve postcards bearing his lithographed autograph with pictures of the places to be visited and posted to the subscriber from each port of call, there would be a ready demand, and they would serve as an historic memento of the occasion. Apart from considerations of profit, I would get some useful publicity. "Captain Scott was very nice and said he would be only too glad to help me, and he thought the plan a very good one" (*letter home*). In due course my *Discovery* cards appeared. I employed an artist to design suitable emblems. The last card posted before the Expedition left for Antarctic regions, portrayed a realistic Polar Bear. This was a bad *gaffe*—there are no bears at the South Pole. I ought to have known better. My mistake was pointed out in the Press. Never mind, free publicity was not to be despised. Till Captain Scott set out on his last voyage ten years later, we remained warm friends. I went to see him sail from Tilbury on his first Expedition. He was on deck and had forgotten a handkerchief. I had a clean one in my pocket, which I handed him. I liked to think that apart from the postcards I had one of my belongings on board.

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"I do hope the Queen will get all right again, but Lord Esher was telling me yesterday that he is afraid it is serious. He was going to have stayed at Osborne next week, but was put off." (*Diary letter home January 19, 1901.*) Queen Victoria was evidently extremely ill. It seemed impossible to envisage a world in which she could be no more. I felt a personal attachment to her. I had seen her so often driving down the High Street at Eton.

* Captain Scott of South Pole fame.

But then my thoughts veered again to my business. Why had I not had some Queen Victoria postcards ready in advance? German publishers had postcards of all celebrities ready printed years before their death. I had been caught napping. I wired to Lafayette in Dublin for photographs and started off for Germany with them in my suitcase on Tuesday, 22nd January—the Queen was dying—there was no doubt of it.

“I left Clarence Terrace in a hansom at 7.40,” I wrote home, “and as I was driving across Oxford Street by Marble Arch, I saw placards everywhere of the Queen’s death, and newspaper boys rushing about. Poor old lady, she has certainly had a marvellous reign. I do not believe that anyone’s death will ever have been felt by such a number of people. There was a depressed feel in the air all through London . . . I got the 8.15 train to Port Victoria for the Flushing boat.”

CHAPTER X

POSTCARDS BOOMING

MY trip to Germany to arrange the details in connection with the Queen Victoria postcards was the first of many. I had to go to Saxony or Berlin two or three times a year to see the various manufacturers and make arrangements for our ever-increasing needs. Subsequently when we published coloured and comic postcards I was able to patronise British manufacturers, but at the outset, I depended entirely on German printers because of their greater experience and technical knowledge.

On these journeys I made many business friends and had interesting discussions about trade matters. The first time I was called "Herr Direktor" I felt a thrill. Many of my associates were merely commercial travellers, I was the head of a business! On my first journey I travelled to Berlin with several Jewish importers who lived in England. They were prosperous: one of them imported German enamel ware into Great Britain and his business was leaping ahead. He strongly advised me to take up enamel ware. There was more money in it than in postcards—in which statement he proved to be correct. For a few hours I toyed with the idea. Another time there was a Jew merchant on his way to Leipzig. He advised furs. But I disliked the thought of the fur trade. There was so much cruelty in trapping the poor animals. I decided to stick to postcards.

I returned to London from my first visit in time for Queen Victoria's funeral. I had an excellent seat in St. James's Palace. "The crowd was enormous. My seat was in the front row," records a letter home. "I could see the procession for fifty yards and it passed right under my nose. After three hours' waiting the procession began to pass at 12.0. First came detachments from the chief regiments, marching with reversed rifles, then came the

Guards' band playing a dead march, next the Foreign Military Attachés, Lord Roberts, and then the gun carriage with the coffin on it. It was drawn by eight 'creams' accompanied by the grooms in their brilliant uniforms. The coffin was covered with a Union Jack. On it lay the Queen's crown and sceptre. Just behind rode the Royal mourners and foreign representatives. First came King Edward, the Duke of Connaught and the Kaiser, and then the Kings of Greece and Portugal, Prince Arthur of Connaught, the Crown Prince of Germany, and then came Queen Alexandra in a carriage. Every head was uncovered and not a sound was to be heard. The procession took twenty-five minutes to pass. The whole thing was most impressive. There was a feeling of deep gloom in the air."

Although my Queen Victoria postcards arrived a week late, they had a ready sale and made my name known in the trade. I was always on the look-out for special schemes to keep the Wrench Series before the public. In conjunction with W. T. Stead and his son Henry, we published a "links of Empire" series. When the present King and Queen made their famous tour in H.M.S. *Ophir* to Australia and New Zealand we made arrangements for the posting of cards from the places visited. I thus describe my meeting with Henry's father: "At lunch I met the famous W. T. Stead. He certainly must be a *good* man, even though he is so eccentric. They treated me very generously in our joint scheme."

The business began to expand rapidly—my father came over to London and at a lunch with Lord Esher at the Carlton Hotel it was decided that a small partnership was to be drawn up and that Lord Esher and W. T. Stead would each take a fifth interest. Lord Esher's representative was to be his secretary, Stanley Quick, and Stead's his son, Henry. My father wrote to my mother: "I hope we have arrived at a wise conclusion—the truth is the child could not cope with all that has to be done without advisers." If I had known at the time that my father was referring to the head of the Wrench firm as "the child" I should have been mortified.

Business continued to boom. Orders poured in from

all parts of the country. The Wrench Series was growing rapidly and now included, in addition to views, national types, actors, actresses, celebrities, and animals. Seven months after opening our office a letter home states, "182,000 cards arrived from Germany on Friday and 75,000 on Saturday. We did £250 worth of business last month." Our chief problem was how to keep pace with the orders. Optimistic though I was, I had greatly underestimated the demand. For the best eight weeks of the season we had been out of stock at the Tower of London and other good centres. Customers abused our lack of foresight. We must order larger supplies from our printers—and we did.

Our staff began to expand. I appointed an office manager and several commercial travellers. I no longer went out canvassing for orders myself in the ordinary routine. I reserved my energies for trying to pull off large coups. I kept in my own hands all negotiations with Government departments, railway companies and big concerns. I had a satisfactory interview with the famous hotelier, M. Ritz, at the Carlton Hotel, and arranged for my cards to be sold by the porter in the hall. I went to Warwick and Lady Warwick kindly gave me permission to have the Wrench Series sold in the Castle. I made successful business trips to Scotland, Ireland, Wales and the North of England. On one occasion I was staying at a commercial hotel, and I dined with the other "commercial" at the commercial table. I sat at the end of the table, was called "Mr. Vice" (which I believe is short for Mr. Vice-President)—after our meal a money box was passed round and we all contributed to commercial traveller charities. As I travelled through the country I saw everything through the eyes of a postcard publisher. I looked out of the train, as the stations flashed by I thought—"Let me see, Nuneaton! Oh, yes, we have a series of twelve cards and they are not selling as quickly as I should like; or Chester, what a pity our popular series there is out of stock, I wish those wretched printers would hurry up." I foresaw a Britain in which the Wrench Series was on sale in every town of importance. My dream came true by the end of three years.

During the first two years of my postcard career I went out in society. I was young—I enjoyed life. I burnt the candle at both ends. I played late, I worked late. On nights when I was not dining out I frequently stayed at the office till midnight. There were repeated entries in my diary—"Was at the office till 12.0." One year I went to the play over sixty times. I was in the swim. I liked to show my family what a man of the world I was. I knew stage celebrities. My business brought me in touch with all sorts and conditions of men. At my first ball in 1901 there were twenty-two dances, fifteen of them waltzes. "I danced every one except one, when I was at supper. It was great fun," I wrote to my parents. "I enjoyed it immensely. I got on A1 with my waltzing and I have come to the conclusion that there is no dance like a waltz. At 3.0 I drove home." The next dance I went to was in Portman Square, evidently I did not know many people as I wrote: "It wasn't bad, but the fashion of not introducing is rather a bother I think."

A year before in Germany the South African war had almost monopolised my attention. In the whirl of my expanding business and of my first London season, I gave it little thought. There are only few references to it in my diaries and letters. In May 1901 I wrote, "They seem to be making a fine number of captures." In July 1902 I described Lord Kitchener's return in my weekly letter home. "Saturday was a lovely day. It could not have been better for the return of Lord K. Not too warm and a delicious cool wind. Kitchener looked very brown and well, though he looked as if he was very much bored by the proceedings, which I expect was the case. Lord Roberts got the best reception, which I was surprised at."

On August Bank Holiday 1901 I went for my first drive in a motor—it was a Panhard: "I was taken for a drive into Brighton by a man who has got his motor here (Shoreham), and who came down from London in it on Saturday. It was a lovely sensation—like gliding, but down hills we went so smoothly that I felt as if we were running away and pressed my feet hard against the floor." I was certainly living in a new era. Victorianism had gone.

I represented the new age, an age in which there would be more business daring than ever before. I would explore uncharted seas of commerce and blaze new trails. My example would be followed. Young Englishmen would show America that there was just as much enterprise on our side of the Atlantic. Great things were going to happen in the British Empire once youth got a chance of showing the way. Young England was inspired by Cecil Rhodes. In May 1902 I wrote home, "What a splendid end to a great career Rhodes' will is. It is one of the finest things I have ever read and especially the way in which he wishes to promote Imperialism and the friendship of the Anglo-Saxon races. The fact that he has included Germany in his scheme ought to make the Germans feel very small after all that they have said about him." I became more and more convinced that we should emulate American modern industrial efficiency. I read American magazines—one of them was, I think, called *Success*; it told the stories of young men who had wrested fortunes from simple ideas.

My parents evidently thought I needed a holiday, so I was taken away for the month of September 1901, for a delightful tour through Bosnia and Herzegovina, where my father studied the efficient methods of the Austro-Hungarian administration, and then through Montenegro and Albania. The culminating point of the tour was driving through the mountains of Montenegro to Lake Scutari in Albania, where "one of the great charms of the lake is the bird life: one sees quantities of every kind of bird, including pelicans and ibis." We returned *via* the Dalmatian Coast and Venice—together a delightful trip, but on this occasion I did not regret the end of the holidays as I longed to be at work again. I was returning to my growing business. We now had taken a second floor and were already beginning to think of larger premises.

On my nineteenth birthday my mother wrote me a letter from her heart. After sending me all her customary loving wishes she wrote: "I thank God for giving you to me. I don't want you to answer me in any way, but I should like just to urge you, my darling, not to starve the spiritual

part of your nature. If you don't eat properly, your body must suffer, if you don't read and improve your mind, it must suffer, and if you don't feed your soul it also must suffer and then in time of temptation *you must fall away*. I am sure it is very hard for you, tired at night and in a hurry in the morning, to make time to read a few of God's words—but *don't neglect that*. 'Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.' "

My mother was right. I was starving the spiritual side of my nature. I was fighting my way, every minute of the day was filled with engrossing problems, religion seemed a relatively unimportant matter. When I had made my business I could attend to my soul. I had belonged to the Scripture Union and since my confirmation had read a few verses of the Bible every day and had said hurried prayers. For some years now, apart from going to Church on most Sundays I fear my prayers were very spasmodic. In moments of sorrow I thought of things of the spirit, but for the most part my attention was entirely taken up with this world.

Trade continued to jump ahead. By August 1902 we were selling £800 worth of cards in a month, or as much as we had sold in the first eight months of our existence. By November we had booked £1,950 worth of orders in the month. All my estimates would have to be revised. Provided we could get continuous supplies and overcome the difficulties of financing a rapidly expanding business, there seemed to be no limits to the possibilities before us. Our traveller from the Lake District reported that no other publisher had a look in. My financial adviser and friend, Mr. Hugh Spottiswoode, the King's Printer, was much impressed with our expanding trade and prospects. I only drew £150 per annum from the business as I did not want to saddle it with a large salary. We now formed ourselves into a Limited Company. I was chairman and managing director. Apparently there was in the Company Act no law against minors occupying high positions. Mr. Hugh Spottiswoode became a large shareholder and his secretary Mr. Arthur Croxton became a director. I was now regarded as a successful business man. Friends came to ask for openings or to borrow money. Rumours began to circu-

late about an Etonian who was "making a fortune from postcards." I engaged as my first private secretary Miss Cherrie Fresco, whose family ran an antique shop and who for several years had been secretary to Mr. Clement Scott, the journalist. Our staff numbered fifteen and included travellers, clerks, book-keepers, packers and typists.

It never rains but it pours. I was head of one of the most rapidly growing concerns in the country. My services were in demand elsewhere. Within two or three months I had several offers. Lionel Ford, who had just become headmaster of Repton, lunched with me and enquired whether I would entertain the idea of becoming his private secretary and taking up a scholastic career. In June 1902 Hugh Spottiswoode invited me to come into his firm and look after two important departments of the business. My pride was flattered. A firm in the city offered me through my father a partnership with an income of £2,000 a year in four years' time. I certainly had my foot on the ladder of success.

I received permission to publish the official programme of King Edward's Coronation. This was good publicity and a few hundred pounds profit would not come in amiss. It was produced in England and very well printed. I chartered several horse vans and I was actually supervising the delivery of the programmes to the Government stands in Whitehall on June 24th from the interior of the van, surrounded by bundles, when newspaper boys rushed by shouting :

"Coronation postponed."

This was a bolt from the blue. Fortunately, I had taken out a policy at Lloyds some weeks before at a cost of £50 to provide me with £1,000 if for any reason the Coronation did not take place on the appointed day, June 26th. Thanks to this I incurred no losses. I spent the whole night of August 8th, on the eve of the actual Coronation, at work at the office supervising the arrangements for distribution. The venture netted a couple of hundred pounds. "I saw the whole procession both going to and coming from the Abbey," I wrote home. "It was a splendid sight and the King was given a great ovation, and considering what he has been through, he looked wonderfully well."

The summer of 1902 was a sad one for our family. In May, my only brother, Arthur, who was a subaltern in the Central India Horse, came home on sick leave. I had been warned that he was passing through London, but when a coffee-coloured emaciated man with a stoop came into my office I could not believe my eyes. Could it be my brother who a couple of years before was a splendid specimen of a young Englishman—six foot two in his socks. My brother had contracted a deadly disease called Kala Azar. He was attended by Sir Ronald Ross and on his way through London, consulted Sir Patrick Manson. From the first I think they knew that the disease was incurable. To-day I understand Kala Azar can be cured if taken in time. For five months my mother, father and sister watched him fighting a losing struggle. Each week he became thinner, dropsy set in—Corbett, our butler, nursed him as his own son. My brother would allow no one else to minister to him. On October 13th his sufferings came to an end. I arrived when all was over. It was the first time that I had ever come face to face with the winged messenger. There was something so relentless, so inevitable about death. This surely could not be the end of everything ?

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In the summer of 1902 I took a decision, in consultation with my father, which in retrospect seems very foolish. Mr. Henry Head, of Messrs. Henry Head & Co., 27 Cornhill, the father of the friends with whom I was living, offered to take me into his underwriting and brokerage business at 27, Cornhill, and after I had served my apprenticeship, to push me forward. My father wrote to my mother, "On becoming an underwriter at Lloyds, in three years' time he would be making £1,000 per annum, and if he stuck to his job, he would in due course be made a director, which would bring him in another £1,000 a year. Mr. Head was kindness itself."

The offer was too good to be refused—at least so we argued. In the event of the postcard business not turning out as well as we hoped, I would have a second string to

my bow. But in reality I nearly fell between two stools. I was setting myself an impossible task. I was delicate and constantly laid up. Now for six months I was down in the City from 10.0 to 5.0, then after the trying atmosphere and noise of Lloyds I returned to Wrench Limited, which had now removed to larger premises in Arthur Street, New Oxford Street. Already tired I then attempted to direct a rapidly growing business, staying there for a minimum of a couple of hours and frequently till 11.0 or 12.0 at night. In the spring of 1903 I spent most Saturdays and Sundays at my postcard business as well.

It is always easy to be wise after the event, but I can not understand how we thought I could do two things well at the same time. The postcard business was racing ahead and by the spring of 1903 I decided that I must concentrate on it alone. So I bade farewell to my kind friends at Cornhill. The postcard business was my child and it wanted my undivided attention. The fag end of a tired brain would not do.

On my twentieth birthday I wrote home, "I feel getting so old, just think being twenty, it seems a big step from one's teens." The starting of the postcard business seemed much further back than twenty-four months. So much had happened. We had no sooner moved to No. 2 Arthur Street than one building was inadequate to our growing needs, and within twelve months we had taken the next three houses. Wrench Limited was an octopus. It consumed houses. The houses were made inter-communicating, with iron doors between each house, in deference to London County Council regulations. I sometimes wondered would the business never stop growing?

I was getting stale, the twofold work at Lloyds and at the postcards was beginning to tell. At Christmas I went out to join my family at Tangier in Morocco for three or four weeks. I went out to Gibraltar by P. & O., and among the passengers was an old friend of my father, Sir Edward Carson.* We had long talks about the need for establishing a Ministry of Commerce and for pushing British trade. I aired my views as to the necessity of overhauling our commercial methods. Lord Carson was

* Subsequently Lord Carson.

an indulgent listener. On getting to Gibraltar, Harold Nicolson, who was also going to spend his holidays with his parents—his father, Sir Arthur Nicolson,* was British Minister at Tangier—told me he was going over to Tangier in a torpedo destroyer and that I was to come too. I was delighted, I had never been in a destroyer before. We raced across the Straits and took a third of the time of the ordinary steamer. We cut through the water. At Tangier everything was pitch dark. Badly lit quays and winding streets with few windows. Mysterious Moors glided noiselessly about. In five minutes I had stepped back from the twentieth century to the middle ages. In Morocco thirty-one years ago there were no roads, no wheeled vehicles. If you wanted to dine out, you rode a donkey. In the hills near by, Raisuli the brigand chief held sway. I wanted to ride to Tetuan, but Sir Arthur Nicolson stopped me. He said he would not be answerable for the consequences.

I enjoyed the complete change and forgot the problems of postcards. We were all very sorry to leave Tangier. We were quite a cavalcade when we went down to the quay from our hotel. "M. & W. rode on donkeys, F. and I walked beside them—our baggage was on four more donkeys. Several friends came to see us off." (*Diary*.) We returned home through Southern Spain. In the Gipsy Quarter of Granada I had my fortune told. The sooth-sayer understood her business. She prophesied "money and yet more money"—the right answer for an ambitious young business man. I thought of Thomas Lipton and Cecil Rhodes—would-be Empire-builders must have money.

1903 was even more successful than 1902. I was voted a salary of £500 by the Board. Our four buildings in Arthur Street were a hive of activity. Packing cases of postcards and postcard stands were arriving and departing all day long. Our staff now numbered sixty. We had a dozen travellers on the road. My father wrote home, "I am really amazed at the progress they have made since I was

* Subsequently Lord Carnock.

last here. The whole office is so well arranged and all the employees look so happy and interested that anyone must be impressed on coming here." I became much attached to the members of the staff. I frequently went into the packing room in times of rush and worked with them at the packing tables. I think they always knew that I regarded myself as one of them and that I would not ask them to do any job I was not ready to do myself.

In a week's flying visit to Germany I placed orders for five million postcards. We were now selling over £3,000 worth of cards each month. Our stock ran into millions. For the coming season we were preparing for a monthly output of three millions. We took half the output of several printers. Our postcard stands were to be seen from Land's End to John o' Groat's. The Prince of Wales' children sent Christmas greetings to friends on the Wrench Series. By October our sales had reached £4,000 a month, we were already talking of a monthly turnover of five figures. The catalogue of the Wrench Series ran to sixty-four pages. During the spring and early summer of 1903 I thought of nothing but the business—I gave up Society and all outside activities—I now spent most week-ends at the office—it was the only way I could keep up with the rush. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy—never mind the dullness, let's get on with the job, and we did. I no longer bicycled to the office—I preferred coming by 'bus. I used to take the dark green Express City Atlas. Coming by *express* 'bus was the seal of the successful business man. The minimum fare was sixpence and only the best drivers were used and the best horses. The *express* 'bus went by back street short cuts and made few stops. We "rushed" at eight or nine miles an hour past all other vehicles, except extra fast hansoms.

1902-1903 were black years for my family. Everything went wrong. My success was the one bright spot. My father lost most of his fortune in South Africa, my poor brother died, and finally, on Easter Monday, 1903, my mother was nearly killed in a bicycle accident. I had rushed over to Ireland for a few days' rest. My mother, my sister and I went for a cycling expedition into the Dublin

mountains. After a picnic lunch my mother and I were cycling down a steep mountain road near Ticknock, close to Dundrum, my sister was riding behind us. Suddenly, to my horror, my mother's machine began to gather speed and she seemed unable to put on her brakes. She was wearing woollen gloves, as the weather was still very cold. In those days there was a special type of brake—subsequently discontinued—which was put on or off by twisting the handles. My mother's hands were cold. The woollen gloves slipped, they could not grasp the vulcanite.

A year before that fatal ride my mother had written to me as follows:—

"Yesterday I had a ride on the Bray Road to try to get over my nervousness about my new bicycle. I shall soon get to understand it. It is just having no brake, to see or hold, that makes me nervous. As I don't yet quite know how far to twist the handles to put on the brake—but it is a beautiful machine and runs delightfully."

I tried to keep up with my mother's headlong course downhill, but she dashed past me. I shouted, but could do nothing. She was flung violently against a low jagged stone wall. She lay a huddled mass on the mountain road. The wire frame of her black hat had got entangled with the locks of her grey hair, through which blood trickled. The scene as it still lives in my memory is too vivid for further details. I shouted to my sister to ride carefully down the hill for help to Dundrum. There were two farm-hands working in a field on the side of the mountain. I rushed to them. I don't know what I would have done without them. There was a cottage a couple of hundred yards away. We carried my mother's unconscious body into the house. I had difficulty in keeping her right arm from knocking against stones. It was broken and hung helplessly down—it looked uncanny. There was a peasant woman in the hut and she deftly cut away my mother's hat, in which the blood was congealing and sticking to her head. The woman sponged the poor unrecognisable face. I could not have done it. I was confronted with real tragedy. Ambition and post-cards seemed very trivial things. What did anything

matter, if only that poor battered head would stop bleeding and my mother would cease moaning.

This was the greatest sorrow I had ever had. It was so sudden. How could disaster come in a flash like this? Everything was happy and serene, and a few seconds later you were shaken to your foundations. There never could be complete security in life again . . .

As I sat by the roadside an hour before opening, with my numbed fingers, the grease-proof paper in which the sandwiches were wrapped, how little I knew what lay ahead of the Wrench family. We had been through difficult times, but the greatest disaster was lying ahead of us.

Those brakes with their slippery vulcanite handles affected the destiny of several lives, my mother's, my father's, my sister's, and to a lesser degree mine. For many years my mother's health was the chief pre-occupation of our family.

A couple of hours later the first doctor came. On a cold April night, it had been snowing, a mournful procession started out on the journey home, nine miles away. An ambulance going at walking pace and the family on bicycles as escort.

Willing hands carried up the stairs an unconscious figure wrapped in white bandages and laid it on a bed. The next day my mother regained consciousness. Her skull had been fractured, her arm broken in two places. From that day she has been more or less an invalid, although in entire possession of her mental powers, and her appearance in no way affected. A marvellous escape. Sometimes as I sit opposite to her at luncheon in her garden room at Hythe in Kent, open on one side to the rose-garden, and watch her eating her vegetarian meals—my mother has been a strict vegetarian for thirty years—I cannot believe that her poor head really went through that terrible experience.

I was overworked when I went away. My few days in Ireland had been no rest. On my return I again plunged myself into the vortex. I never worked harder in my life. I had a stubborn cough that would not go. At last my

parents insisted on my consulting a leading doctor in Harley Street. The doctor was adamant: I must knock off all work and go abroad for two months if I wanted to avoid a complete breakdown. My father wrote to my mother: "He says E. has a chance of becoming a strong man if he goes away at once and takes two months' complete holiday. He is to go to bed at 9.30 and get up at 9.0 and to live a lazy life in a good climate . . . I can't tell you how relieved I am, as I had been anxious." After re-reading my 1903 diary and my letters home I cannot understand why the breakdown did not come sooner. I was courting disaster, I was carrying an impossible burden on my shoulders. The conduct of a booming business, which was growing from day to day, with the constant anxiety of trying to find more capital for expansion.

I went to Trier on the River Moselle. I obeyed the doctor's orders and got up at nine. For three days I spent most of my time walking and meditating in the German woods—the forests of Central Europe have played a great part in my life. Several of the biggest decisions in my life have been taken in them. Away from human habitation I felt stirrings of my starved soul. The Hound of Heaven was in pursuit. The dust of living had obscured my vision. I was not facing up to some of my problems. I had let decisions slide. In the stillness of the German woods my conscience spoke—I grappled with the Foul Fiend—I made certain resolutions. That struggle in the forest remains one of the landmarks of my life. However much immersed I became in my outward career the next seven years, however many times I stumbled on the way, I was never the same again. Seven years later in Westminster Abbey when I went through a deep spiritual experience I thought of the help I had got from German woods in spring.

My mother and sister joined me at Augsburg. My mother was an invalid now, so, after a rest in the Salzkammergut, we went the week's journey by steamer down to the mouth of the Danube. A delightful and resting trip, touching in at little towns on the river banks in Austria,

Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria and Roumania. At Gurgievo, after spending a few days at Bucharest we turned round and came back, upstream, to Belgrade. It was our second visit to the Balkans in two years. I studied some of those difficult racial problems which were to play such a large part in Europe ten years later. On starry nights on deck as we steamed upstream I listened to the plaintive songs of Serb students, who sang of a greater Serbia. They were bitter about the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. I was reminded of Nationalist Ireland.

"There were several Roumanian peasants on board," my diary records, "and in the evenings I danced their national dance with them." I loved these simple peasants in their picturesque clothes. They were just like children. Peasants were such nice people. They were a universal type. I liked the peasants in Germany, Poland, Russia, Bavaria, Austria and the Balkans equally. They were tillers of the soil—I did not give them a national label—I sometimes wondered why it was that the peasant of one nation was taught from an early age in his school books to hate his neighbours on the other side of the mountains or across the river. But I supposed Europe's professors and statesmen knew what they were doing.

We were in Belgrade shortly after the King's assassination. "We went by tram to the old cemetery," (*Diary*) "where inside the little chapel we saw the exact spot where King Alexander and Queen Draga were buried forty days ago. There is nothing to mark the spot except a few wreaths. Then we walked all round the old Palace and saw the window from which the bodies were thrown."

Being a King in these countries was not a very pleasant business.

CHAPTER XI

" FAME " AND FAILURE

ON my return to London at the end of August I plunged again into my affairs. During my absence the business had continued to expand. I almost hoped it would cease growing for a while. Its appetite for capital was becoming serious. My parents had put in £4,000 which was all they could spare, Mr. Hugh Spottiswoode had provided £2,000, and there were several smaller shareholders. No doubt something would turn up. In the meantime our four buildings were humming with activity from morning till night. My family were still abroad. I wrote " I know you will be glad to hear that I found things going splendidly at Arthur Street. I have never come back and found the business in such a satisfactory state. The only thing now is to speed up the execution of the enormous quantities of orders we have in hand."

In two months' time I would be twenty-one. My co-directors were of the opinion that the occasion should be celebrated in some special way. They not only wished me to have the pleasantest birthday I had ever had but they wished to organise an impressive demonstration—to show the public and the trade that Wrench Limited was the largest house in Great Britain dealing exclusively with postcards. Hugh Spottiswoode was enthusiastic over the scheme. The task of organising the celebrations fell on my co-director, Arthur Croxton, Hugh's private secretary. I naturally could not organise a tribute to myself!

The idea of giving me a banquet was Hugh Spottiswoode's. It was great fun to be given a 21st birthday banquet and after three years' very hard work and the successful building up of a large business which now employed 100 hands, to find yourself famous. At the beginning of September I wrote to my father " The birthday banquet idea is taking definite shape. At

Croxton's and Hugh Spottiswoode's suggestion we are going send invitations to our chief customers. The invitations will be sent out by the directors of Wrench Limited to celebrate the majority of their Chairman and Managing Director. Hugh Spottiswoode will propose my health and you are to propose 'our guests.' In the same week we are going to have an exhibition of our various series of cards at the Grafton Galleries, so altogether we hope to have a fairly good puff."

Coming events cast their shadows before them, the celebration on October 29th was always in the background of my thoughts, whatever I might be doing. Success really was mine. The number of our customers was over four thousand. Our orders booked in September had exceeded £4,000. We anticipated a turnover of over £50,000 next year. Our ratio of profit was satisfactory. Nothing could now stand in our way. Early in October I started two new departments: Publicity and Hand Colouring. We bought a small printing press for doing our own printing of postcard packets on the premises.

Politics were also exciting. "J. Chamberlain made his great speech at Glasgow last night, it is quite refreshing to read his words," I wrote home. In 1903 I was an ardent Tariff Reformer. But I had no time for politics now. When "Joe" was making his fortune out of screws he stuck to his job. I was going to make my fortune in postcards. When I had enough money I would try to emulate "Joe." This might sound conceited but why should not I be a great statesman? I had set out to conquer the picture postcard field in Great Britain in three years. I had done what I set out to do. I had been told it was impossible. I knew now that the croakers and wet blankets were wrong. The same methods that brought success to a boy of seventeen would probably later on in ten years bring success to a budding M.P. with a reputation as a successful business man behind him.

Rumours of the forthcoming banquet began to circulate. References to the youthful business prodigy appeared in the Press. I was now good "copy." The first paper to publish a detailed interview was *Tit-Bits*—ten years

earlier *Tit-Bits* in its friendly green cover had been my favourite weekly. There were no friends like old friends. Two days later interviews with me appeared in the *Daily Express* and *Morning Leader*. Carmelite House was not going to be left behind. A long account of the Managing Director not yet twenty-one appeared in the *Evening News*. "When one sees all this in print," I wrote in my diary, "it makes one rather ashamed of oneself."

I no longer drove to the office but walked the whole way from Regent's Park to New Oxford Street. I wrote home, "I find walking down to the office just makes all the difference. I leave here at 8.30 and am down at the office at 9.0. It sets a good example to the staff." I was interviewed by the *Daily News* and J. A. Hammerton appeared on the scene to do a "Page Four" story about me for the *Daily Mail*, by special command of Alfred Harmsworth. A very pleasant friendship with Sir John Hammerton dates from this first interview.

Cinemas did not exist in those days, but my sensations must have been very similar to a cinema actor who has suddenly become famous. Everybody was talking about me, invitations poured in upon me. I was worth cultivating. The number of my "friends" grew overnight. My fame had now spread to the United States. Cables flashed along the bed of the Atlantic about "youthful prodigy of commerce." "English boy wrests fortune from simple idea." "Postcards his bonanza." "Wrench began on 250 dollars, now making 100,000 dollars a year." "Evelyn Wrench, whose coming of age is to be celebrated next week by a banquet, is a remarkable example of inborn business initiative turned to profitable account"—and so on, column after column. Requests for my autograph reached me from America. One correspondent addressed me "Mr. Evelyn Wrench, souvenir postcard king, London." The letter was delivered by the clever Post Office. I was flattered.

This was all very thrilling, but I began to feel alarmed. There was the speech. Eleven days beforehand I practised it before the glass. I think my sensations must have been a mild reflex of what a woman feels before childbirth.

She looks forward to the day but dreads the inevitability of it. Nothing I could do would stop the clock, unless I turned round and fled, which was unthinkable. Every second was bringing me nearer to the fateful evening. More interviews with American newspaper men—more interviews with the British provincial periodical Press. One enterprising paper reported my birthday banquet a week before it took place.

At last the day came. I drove round to the Euston Hotel, where my family were staying, in a hansom. I could not settle down sufficiently to walk. My father and mother gave me a fur coat, which I have to this day. Arthur Street was gay with bunting, the main staircase was decorated. The entire indoor staff was gathered in the Packing Room. A round of cheers greeted me. I almost felt like crying, I didn't know why. Everybody beamed—I laughed for joy. I climbed up the three flights of stairs to my third floor office. It was a mass of flowers. On my desk was a beautiful half-hunter gold watch, made by J. W. Benson, in an imposing red leather case, from the indoor staff. I was deeply touched. That watch is in my pocket to-day—for thirty years it has kept perfect time. I then went into the rooms of the sales manager and the travelling staff. Here I was given a beautiful example of the book-binders' art, a great volume containing specimens of some of the Wrench Series. The album had been bound and tooled by the Guild of Women Bookbinders. I subsequently learned it had cost £53—truly a magnificent gift—but one is only twenty-one once in a lifetime. "I did feel happy that they should care to give me such lovely presents," I wrote in my diary. "I felt rather frightened as the evening drew near. At 6.30 I left Clarence Terrace in my fur coat and called at the Euston Hotel to fetch father, and we drove down together to the Criterion."

Cloppity, cloppity clop, the hansom went jingling down Tottenham Court Road and Shaftesbury Avenue. My father talked to me to keep my mind distracted. But I only gave half answers—if only I could jump the next three hours, till my speech was over, with the assurance that all had gone well. If only—but here we were at the

familiar "Cri." I reluctantly handed my lovely sable-neck lined fur coat to the attendant. I walked up the stairs with my father—kept nervously clearing my throat—why hadn't I brought some lozenges with me? My knees knocked together on the stairs. Oh, there they all were waiting. I forgot my anxieties—I was surrounded by friends. I was the hero of the occasion. It was not as frightening as I had expected. I had no time to be nervous; for half-an-hour we stood talking in the reception room; I was introduced to everyone. Mr. Arthur Croxton, subsequently manager of the Coliseum, was in the chair and made an admirable master of ceremonies. The assembly, in addition to many of our leading customers, included a formidable array of newspaper reporters and journalists, among the latter R. D. Blumenfeld and Clement Shorter. Newspaper proprietors, among them Hugh Spottiswoode and Philip Agnew of *Punch*; Willie Ellison Macartney, Deputy Master of the Mint,* T. Henniker Heaton, M.P., the postal reformer, and many others. It was an excellent dinner, but I had no appetite for the *Suprêmes de Ris de Veau Royale*, the *Salle de Pré Salé Mascotte* or the *Faisan en Casserole*. I drank one glass of Deutz & Geldermann champagne 1895, and quite enjoyed the *bombe*, it soothed my throat.

During dinner the waiters kept bringing me telegrams of congratulation. Everything was more or less of a blur. I felt excitably happy and apprehensive in turn. I was sitting next dear old Hugh Spottiswoode, who tried to encourage me. My father was on his other side—he looked proud and pleased. I was reassured.

Then the speech-making started. The Chairman gave the toast of the business of Wrench Limited. Then came a pianoforte selection—Sinding's *Frühlingsrauschen* left me cold—I wished they would stop. How could people sit there calmly puffing their cigars, and listening to music? Then Hugh Spottiswoode made a charming speech in giving the toast "The health of Evelyn Wrench and Prosperity to Wrench Limited." He used a succession of superlatives, he talked about my career as being

* Sir William Ellison Macartney, subsequently Governor of West Australia.

"unique in the history of English commerce." At the time I did not take in all the kind things he was saying, my mind was much too much of a jumble. I kept looking anxiously at the watch. Loud applause when he sat down. It would soon be my turn, but there was first an amusing item by Mr. Percy French to sit through—would it never end? My heart thumped, I kept clasping my hands under the table where no one could see. I applauded exaggeratedly when Percy French sat down. Now it really was come—this thing I had feared. I got up—deafening applause. Surprisingly, once I was on my feet I did not feel nervous. I told a straightforward account of my early start, of dancing an Irish jig with Conolly, my office boy, when we got our first big order, of the coming of success when I drove round the West End selling postcards in a one-horse commercial brougham hired by the week, of the 500 cards sold in our first month, of our estimated sale of 50,000,000 cards next year, of our staff of 100. My speech concluded with a carefully worded sentence, committed to memory, about the loyal co-operation of the staff, and that we hoped to use every labour-saving appliance, and that we would not be too proud to learn from other countries. My concluding words were "There is no height in the publishing world to which we may not attain."

Thank God it was over.

I was now able to enjoy the rest of the programme. The next item was an amusing song composed by Harrison Hill for the occasion entitled "The Perennial Postcard" and dedicated to me, and sung to the old air "The King of the Cannibal Islands." The poem started:

Wherever you go, where-e'er you be,
It's pretty certain you will see
A postcard album, or two, or three,
For the perennial postcard.
And when you leave your mansion-door
Your children, ten or twelve, or more
Come clamouring round you with a roar,
"Be sure you send us a postcard."

the next five verses lead up to verse vii.

Now could we only catch the man
Who hit upon this awful plan,
And who in England first began
To make the perennial postcard.
We'd bring him here and make him dine
We'd fine him with a mighty fine
The author of this Frankenstein
The all-pervading postcard.
And be he English—Irish—French
In flagon of wine we'd drown and drench—
Why—bless my soul! It's Evelyn Wrench
Who made the perennial postcard.

Harrison Hill brought the house down. He was evidently prepared for his ovation. He had an encore verse ready:—

So Evelyn Wrench, our love to you,
You're a clever fellow, good and true,
Go on and increase the revenue,
Good luck to you and your postcards.
In all the tale of British trade,
So plucky a venture ne'er was made
Nor such a broad foundation laid,
For the future of the postcard.

And that is why from far and near
We're met to-night and gathered here
To wish good health and luck and cheer
To Evelyn and his postcards.

Then followed my father's toast to the guests, which was responded to by Mr. W. Ellison Macartney, Mr. Henniker Heaton and Mr. G. King, the Managing Director of *The Sphere and Tatler*. It was nearly midnight. I do not know how many times my hand was squeezed—it was aching. Everybody agreed the evening had been a triumph. I went home tired but happy. With such a send-off the success of the last three years would certainly be nothing compared with the next three. I would work as I had never worked before.

Our celebrations spread into the next week. Our exhibition at the Grafton Gallery was successful though from my standpoint it was an anti-climax. We devised a novel way of advertising the exhibition. Let the *Daily Mail* record the story.

"Some excitement was occasioned in the West End yesterday by a unique effort made by Messrs. Wrench Limited, the pictorial postcard publishers to advertise their 'Art in Picture Postcards' Exhibition. From an advertisement contractor's office in Soho there issued six walking red postal pillar boxes. A crowd quickly gathered, and when a photographer arrived to 'snap' the pillar boxes, policemen were required to keep the public in order."

But the Commissioner of Police put his foot down and they were sent back to the contractors.

All England knew about the Wrench Series now. Even staid papers like the *Westminster Gazette* and *St. James's Gazette* joined the chorus of praise.

I began to think out new "stunts." I produced a series of cards which insured the sender for twenty-four hours for £250 in case of death by accident, and while travelling in any public conveyance.

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But the storm clouds began to gather. Till I finally retired eight months later I led a harassed life. In reviewing the final chapter of my postcard career I cannot quite fix on any one moment when I can state definitely that we turned from success to failure. Ours was a curious failure. It came not from a lack of customers and bad trade, but from having too many customers. Trade was too good.

I spent a sad winter. My mother had to have her arm re-broken several times and had two or three operations. She was staying in London with my father and sister. It was a depressing background to return to in the evenings. She should never have been taken on that trip down the Danube in the summer. I felt partially responsible. She should have been allowed to stay quietly in Ireland to get over her terrible accident. And when I got round late in the evening to the Gwalia Hotel where she was staying, after my trying day's work, I had no happy news to report.

The appetite of the postcard monster was insatiable. We had just booked over £5,000 worth of orders in a month, there was no limit to the demand provided we could finance the business. Wrench Limited was eating

up capital. We wanted more capital and yet more capital. All joy in watching bounding trade returns left me. I felt as if I was in a nightmare, I had never before thought that our enterprise could be choked by a plethora of orders. I had no experience of businesses killed by good trade. None of my grown-up advisers had warned me about over-trading till recently and it was always easy to be wise after the event.

I will try and explain clearly just what happened. When I set out to capture the postcard trade of Great Britain my aim was to have one of my postcard stands in every retail shop in the country. These stands cost about 15/- each, I think. Now when a stationer was persuaded to give an order for 2,000 postcards, roughly £4 worth, he must have some means of displaying his cards. In consultation with my outside representatives we devised the plan of *loaning* a postcard stand to every customer. What was the use of having cards for sale if you could not display them? We seized this opportunity of keeping the retailer tied to us. We also deliberately tried to get him to order more cards than he could dispose of in the hope that this would make him concentrate on pushing sales. We did not say to the retailer that he must not stock rival series, but we did say that he must always give our products a good show. Some customers were ready to make use of half-a-dozen stands. There was a never-ending demand for stands.

In terms of cash we had probably invested seven or eight thousand pounds in postcard stands. My financial advisers had not insisted what we should write off the value of these stands over two or three years as ought to have been done. My scheme of supplying stands was perfectly sound provided we had the cash, but a business short of capital ought to have drawn in its horns a year before. Another factor in our undoing and perhaps the primary cause of our failure was the amount of capital locked up in stock.

We had 10,000 different subjects in our series, and our aim was a Wrench Series in every town and tourist resort. Having to keep a stock of every postcard listed in our catalogue meant a stock of many millions of cards.

We might have adopted a different policy in the early days, but it was too late now to change our methods. If we had foreseen the amount of capital required for keeping a stock of all subjects published we would probably have only kept certain popular lines permanently in stock. We would have left smaller places with a limited postcard turnover to others. We would have revised our prices and made our profit on a limited edition of say five thousand cards of one subject. When we had disposed of this number we would have withdrawn this card from circulation. We could have had a clean transaction and made our profit.

But I had other aims. I was not thinking only of profits. If I had been I could have sold out my interest several times for a large profit. I was aiming at possessing the best series of postcards in England. A universal series which would continue to be stocked for many years. If I could have provided the capital my policy was sound. If—

Every new series published meant further large sums of money locked up in stock and especially latterly. The public now began to demand coloured view cards. These cards were lithographed and before you began printing you had to sink £2 in the stone from which each fresh subject was printed. In due course you wrote off the initial cost of the series, but every extra 500 coloured cards meant £1,000 more locked up. I should have faced these facts boldly a year before, and not been taken unawares. I can only claim lack of experience. So far I had always been able to get more capital. All our profits went back into financing our expanding business.

Three months after my banquet celebrations early in 1904 the Amalgamated Press Limited put £8,000 into the business in the form of a debenture. I did not fully understand at the time that in the event of future financial difficulties the debenture holders could of course do just what they liked with the business.

When the total of orders booked in November exceeded £5,000 it no longer gave me much happiness. I felt I was getting into a kind of morass. If we did not want orders what did we want? The *joie de vivre* was leaving me. Being the head of a postcard business was by no means

the joyful career it had seemed only just the other day. I must try and cut down expenses. I had to give notice to some of our employees, a job I hated. I would almost sooner have let the business go smash than part with my friends who had helped me to build it up. My financial advisers pointed out that we had all looked at figures from too rosy a standpoint. That the commission to our travellers had been too generous. That we should have paid our sales manager a percentage *on net profits*, after depreciation on stock and stands had been written off, and not on turnover.

Why had my advisers not told me all this two years before? I could have entirely re-organised our business then. Now I was afraid it was too late but I would do my best. I now used to go round to see Mr. Harold Harmsworth* and he gave me excellent advice. If only I could have had his helping hand and great experience two years sooner things would have been different. I worked early, I worked late, somehow or other I would win through. The staff never worked harder, our sales were never better, our business never more efficient. I installed American filing methods and card indices. I had a "brain-tickler" on my desk. By means of this "key card index" I could keep in touch with all our many departments, with our branches in Glasgow and Manchester, and study the returns of each individual traveller.

I went home in the evenings with unsolved problems. At night I often woke up with a start thinking of schemes for increasing business without further capital outlay. Surely the "Postcard King" could not fail? No, of course he couldn't. I walked through our premises the next day, through room after room of busy activity, to reassure myself. The staff didn't know the anxiety that was constantly gnawing at me. There was a huge post, bundles of cheques from customers, long lists of fresh orders from the trade and our representatives—everything was humming.

Of course we could find a way of getting fresh capital. Our present capital would last just three months—it was now March 1904. Hitherto I had always found a way out of my difficulties. I would do it again. It was fatuous

* Lord Rothermere.

to suggest that the most successful postcard business in the country could fail—and yet——

One of my new financial advisers had a disconcertingly abrupt way of putting figures before you. He now pointed out that our assets were over-valued in our accounts. Fifteen million postcards might be worth fifteen million half-pence when they were sold, but what about bad stock? The public taste might change. We ought to write down our stock drastically, at least fifty per cent. This of course made our balance sheet look much less favourable. What would happen when our present capital was gone? We could not draw in our horns straight away, we were committed to supply several thousand new subjects.

My mother was still in her London hotel in Bloomsbury. Her long-drawn-out illness affected our spirits. My father and sister and I lunched in the hotel dining room off turkey and plum pudding on Christmas Day 1903. I was very depressed. "It did not seem like Christmas somehow," my diary records. It was the first Christmas I had ever spent away from home. There was something grim about Christmas Day in Bloomsbury.

We returned from hearing the Rev. R. J. Campbell preach at the City Temple spiritually invigorated. I consoled myself with the thought that after all material success was only a minor consideration. That what you did with your life was what really mattered. Still I was deeply involved in the postcard business, our capital and the capital of friends was at stake, our staff depended for their living on me. We owed large sums to creditors. I went round to the bank in Christmas week with my father. My diary records: "We were at the Bank for an hour trying to persuade them to grant us a loan. My friend in the Overdraft Department was courteous but firm. He regretted the House was unable to provide further accommodation."

New Year's Day 1904 was spent in issuing debentures to the Amalgamated Press. They now put a financial adviser into the business. Everything now was turning out very differently from my dream. Could this be the same me who a few months before seemed to have the ball at his feet. How had it all happened? I was just the

same ; the same methods of salesmanship still brought the same results. It was the figures that were now presented in a different way. Of course if the stock of postcards and the stands were no longer regarded as assets everything was different. Three years' calculations had to go by the board. I was terribly depressed.

It was like painfully climbing up a mountain in the heat of the day and when you get to the top, being told you had climbed up the wrong mountain. I didn't feel the energy to go down to the bottom and start all over again—the strain was telling on my health. Anyhow for the immediate future the finances were all right. Alfred Harmsworth* wired from Beaulieu to know when I was coming out to the Riviera to pay him my promised visit. I eagerly seized the chance of getting right away from postcards for a time. I almost began to hate postcards. I knew now what criminals felt like when they were granted a few weeks' reprieve. *I would enjoy my holiday—"sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."*

I left London in a drizzle. The next morning "I woke up to find myself in the Sunny South with a cloudless sky and bright sunshine. I never remember before coming so directly from winter to summer," I wrote home. "Here I am sitting in my bedroom with three large French windows leading on to a marble balcony, from it I look into the garden of the Villa Espalmador, full of oranges and palm trees, and on beyond a brilliant blue Mediterranean." The Alfred Harmsworths were delightful hosts. I was overwhelmed with kindness. Harmsworth took me out in his 60 h.p. Mercedes, though the dust was a drawback, and we went for walks in the olive groves. I enjoyed being in such close proximity to success.

I felt that if I basked sufficiently long in the sunshine of Alfred Harmsworth's personality I might deflect some rays of his business magic to myself. In my heart I felt a failure now—I tried to keep a stiff upper lip and I think I managed to take people in, but my dreams had dissolved as an early mist on a May morning. The foundations of my edifice were tottering—others might take over my business—

* Lord Northcliffe.

as they did—and run it on other lines, but it was not my Wrench Series. I felt sure the end was approaching. I told my assistants at the office not to bother me with letters, I almost dreaded the arrival of letters on our office stationery with the large Wrench trade-mark embossed in red.

What an ungrateful guest I was. I was breakfasting on a white marble verandah, off delicious French rolls, and scrambled eggs and bacon cut in shavings the thickness of a Gillette razor blade, that melted in my mouth, on hot-house strawberries—and I was back again amid my Arthur Street worries. The future must take care of itself. My job now was to shake off my persistent cough and build up reserves of strength and courage.

I watched my host as a scientist might study an inhabitant of Mars. Harmsworth was the personification of success. His career was dazzling. Since those early days in Paternoster Row in 1888 when he started *Answers* he had never looked back. He had started a paper when he was twenty-two. Well, anyhow, fate could not take one crumb of comfort away. Even Alfred Harmsworth had not started a business before he was eighteen.

Alfred Harmsworth was an absorbing personality. I really got to know him. He was then engrossed in the *Daily Mirror*. The previous autumn he had started it as a penny daily paper for women. The venture had been a colossal failure. It was comforting to know great men like Alfred Harmsworth could fail. He then turned it into a half-penny illustrated daily paper. The tide began to turn. The circulation began slowly to creep up. My host told me "he had lost £100,000 in the venture and was still losing £1,000 a day, but every week now the amount is getting smaller and it will soon dwindle away and then will come the harvest." I wrote enviously to my parents.

Although I had been to most parts of Europe, this was my first visit to the Riviera. It was an entirely new world. New standards. Money did not count. A lunch given by my host at Ciro's cost as much as my weekly income. We went into the "Rooms." I became bitten by roulette. A member of our house party made a lot of money. I tried to follow suit in five franc pieces. I put

five francs on zero. It turned up. With a trembling hand I took thirty-five times my stake. I left my original stake. Zero turned up again. Another fist full of silver. Perhaps after all these people who said if one carefully studied the tables one could make money at Monte Carlo were right. I studied the tables. I bought innocent little cards with red and black columns in which you recorded which number and colour turned up. I made elaborate calculations. I had beginners' luck. I came away with bulging pockets. I changed my five francs into gold and 100 franc notes. I returned to Monte Carlo several days running. By the end of my visit the Bank was on top. I gave up my system. I had no more money to gamble with. I could now study humanity, and my surroundings. While I was in the Rooms I had entirely forgotten my worries, outside in the sunshine they came floating back.

One of the things I most disliked at Monte Carlo was the way the poor pigeons were treated. How could the authorities permit such cruelty just to pander to international "sportsmen?" These maimed pigeons haunted me.

One certainly saw very unattractive types of humanity at "Monte." I understood what friends meant when they said that in this beautiful corner of the earth, man alone was vile. But a little of Monte Carlo went a long way. Even lunches at the Hotel de Paris and Ciro's began to pall. This social life was wearisome.

Much as I had enjoyed my visit I was glad when I left and went for a few days' visit to my uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Yeats-Brown, at their delightful fifteenth century Castello at Portofino near Genoa. Monte Carlo and its standard of false values seemed a long way off. My bedroom opened onto a marble balcony on the battlements, below was a rocky promontory covered with olive trees. At night I looked across at the myriad twinkling lights of Santa Margherita and Rapallo.

But I did not enjoy my peace for long. Worrying telegrams reached me about fresh financial crises. I wired: "Don't worry, returning at once." I returned with a sinking heart. I found trade still booming, but our financial position

acute. Frankenstein's monster still wanted more capital. The Amalgamated Press was now deeply involved. As chief debenture holders they could call the tune. In May and June 1904 I lived in a vortex of crises and consultations. I had done my best. I could do no more. I almost wished the whole thing would come to an end. This nerve-racking uncertainty was killing, at one moment the prospect of continuing on the old lines with further capital, at the next moment a decision to wind up the company. In the outside world I was still regarded as a successful young man who had made a fortune in postcards.

Till the debenture holders made up their minds there was no object in staying in London. I then did an extraordinary thing. I could not stand many more days like this. I decided I would buy a car and forget my worries. Everyone on the Riviera had a car, why not I? I had almost enough capital to purchase a lovely seven-horse power Panhard—£400. I borrowed the balance from a business associate; I paid him back within the year. I engaged a chauffeur-mechanic for a couple of months. His weekly wage was more than I lived on. I had surrendered my salary. After going to a play in London one evening I returned to Clarence Terrace. I changed into day clothes and set off in the middle of the night for Holyhead. My chauffeur and I drove in turn. We breakfasted at Coventry, lunched at Chester and dined at Holyhead. We ran into a hail storm in Anglesey. In those days the wind-screens did not protect you. As we rushed along at twenty-three miles an hour the hail stones almost cut our faces. The journey took nearly nineteen hours. I put my car on board and went to sleep for twelve hours on end. My parents very naturally did not approve of my venture, but for three weeks I had a glorious holiday. I motored through the Wicklow hills. I motored with my sister to Ulster and the scenes of our youth in County Fermanagh. I stayed with my married sister at Clogher in County Tyrone. I more or less forgot postcards.

Motoring was an exciting business in Ireland in 1904. The motor owner was a novelty. Cars were entirely unknown in many parts of the country. Donkeys and

horses shied, geese cackled loudly, dogs barked, hens fluttered screeching away, peasants gaped and stared. My friends were not surprised at my appearance in a motor car, naturally a successful business man could indulge his whim for a Panhard.

Of course I should never have embarked in the extravagance of a car. I sold my Panhard a year later for £180, though not before I had taken Harmsworth for several drives in it. But while I had it I enjoyed the sensation of apparent riches. It soothed my wounded pride. When I returned to London the debenture holders had decided to put the business into liquidation. A Receiver was appointed and the business was reconstructed but I was outside it now. The Amalgamated Press ran the business for a couple of years and put considerable sums of further capital into it. But the new management was not successful. Two years later the Wrench business was finally closed down. I could not help being gratified that these business experts had failed too. Running a postcard business was not as easy as it had seemed.

Events had been too much for me. A very ambitious young man could not have had a more bitter pill to swallow. Eight months after being hailed as a business prodigy I was a failure. No one bothered about me. No more press interviews or pictures of myself in the illustrated papers. My fall was in proportion to the giddy heights I had climbed. I came down with a wallop. I sympathised with Humpty Dumpty. I lost confidence in myself. When I returned from the Riviera Wrench Limited had done the best month's trading in its history. Despite good trade I was a failure. High finance had been too much for me. The last letter I ever received from the postcard business was abrupt and to the point. It came from the Receiver :

"DEAR SIR,

"I shall be glad if you will kindly remove any personal effects you may have here and also hand over any keys in order that use may be made of the top room."

"Yours faithfully,"

Why did he refer to my private office as the top room? I don't know what personal effects I had, probably a few pictures, my beautifully bound album, a fountain pen and a leather blotter. My gold watch was safely in my pocket. I had never differentiated between the business and myself. What belonged to it belonged to me. But I was wrong. Apart from my birthday presents I had got nothing out of the business in material possessions. I was glad. No one could say I had drawn large sums when our poor creditors got so little. It was mortifying to think of the losses of my family and of our printers. If I had known businesses could be liquidated like this I would never have placed another order with anyone. My parents never said a word of reproach. They knew I was raw to the quick. They never referred to my failure. To this day I think of their tact with a grateful heart.

On the 28th June a firm of fountain pen manufacturers in the North of England invited me to become chairman of their company. But I had had enough of commerce. How did I know that when sales boomed we should not require more capital. No, thank you.

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How sum up my postcard experience? For many years I could not bear to talk about it—the wound was still raw. I shivered inwardly when well-meaning friends introduced me as *the* Wrench of postcard fame. Thirty years after I know that my postcard failure was the best thing that ever happened to me and I thank God for that experience. No one can be of much use in the world till he has had knocks. The egoist must be chiselled. A young man whose goal was ambition, who wanted to be a second Pitt, required exceptional measures. He got them. Providence knew the right kind of treatment. If the postcard business had been a success I would probably have become insufferable. I would have ridden roughshod over any obstacle to attain my ends.

Instead of reaching dazzling heights, I came down with a crash. I was not one-tenth as clever as I thought I was. Mental suffering and sorrow showed me that ambition was

like a house of cards. When I was rapidly climbing the ladder of success I had no time for anything but my career. Even my poor brother's sufferings did not really touch the inside me, although with the surface me I sympathised. That real me was entirely concentrated on Evelyn Wrench and the great part he was going to play in the world. "E.W." was always going to be in the centre of the stage.

Henceforth I mistrusted the fickle goddess of Fortune. I knew that after smiling at you, her mood would change. You would suddenly find yourself thrown over.

My next lesson was the loss of any tendency to snobbishness which I may have suffered from. I had rubbed shoulders with all sorts and conditions of men. I had packed postcards with packers. I knew what good fellows they were. In future when I looked down on the man-in-the-street from the roof of my 'bus, I no longer felt that I belonged to another class—I had been down in the market place—I too was a man-in-the-street.

I had gained a first-hand knowledge of commerce, law and litigation and finance in the hard school of experience. I learnt through the postcard failure always to mistrust figures, until investigated from every angle. I entirely lost my youthful easy optimism. I never again accepted rose-coloured estimates. I never again counted my chickens before they were hatched. I learnt sympathy from failure, that even if things go wrong other people also have woes. In fine I became more human.

On the debit side my health undoubtedly suffered. I should never have had to go through the experience of doing two jobs simultaneously. I should not have had the burden of financial responsibility of a growing business on my shoulders when in my 'teens. To write the story of my postcard venture has not been easy, it has meant opening pages of my life turned over long ago, which I had never intended looking at again.

WITH NORTHCLIFFE
1904—1912

CHAPTER XII

A NEW START

ABOUT six months before I finally severed my connection with postcards, in the November of 1903, Hugh Spottiswoode arranged a lunch party at the Savoy Hotel so that I could meet Alfred* and Harold Harmsworth.† I was introduced to my future chiefs while washing in the lavatory of the Savoy Hotel. As I was bending over a basin with the soap on my hands, I heard a voice say: "Harold, are we lunching with Hugh and Mr. Wrench?" I looked round to see a man obviously of Nordic stock, with steely blue eyes, clear cut features and a Napoleonic lock of hair hanging over his broad forehead—Alfred Harmsworth.

As we walked to our table in the restaurant, looking over the Embankment, I noticed people nudging their neighbours to point out Alfred Harmsworth. He was only thirty-eight and was the outstanding personality in Fleet Street. His attacks on the Government during the South African war were still in people's minds. It was a great honour to be lunching at the Savoy seated between Alfred and Harold Harmsworth. Alfred Harmsworth was rather silent the first part of lunch and let Hugh Spottiswoode do most of the talking. Then he turned to me and in that incisive way asked me questions about the postcard business that showed he had been following my career. I was flattered when he always addressed me as "Mr. Wrench" and listened with his full attention to my remarks. I do not think I had ever been called "Mr. Wrench" by a much older man before. As I watched him I tried to make out just why he was so phenomenally successful. At this first lunch he did not say anything outstanding. I think the great impression I took away with me was his extraordinary power of absorption in whatever he was discussing.

* Lord Northcliffe.

† Lord Rothermere.

In 1903 I knew comparatively little about Harold Harmsworth for he eschewed publicity. Mr. Harold was very friendly and less frightening than his brother, but I noticed that the elder brother showed by his manner how much value he attached to Mr. Harold's opinions. He frequently said "Has Harold been into that?" or "Harold says there is nothing in it." Not for several years till I myself watched Mr. Harold at work did I recognize the wonderful way in which his qualities rounded off those of his brother. The Harmsworth brothers certainly made a remarkable combination, no wonder they left their rivals behind.

Six months later, on July 1st, 1904, I again lunched with Northcliffe. This time he had another brother with him, Mr. Cecil Harmsworth. We lunched at de Keyser's Hotel on the Embankment, a favourite haunt. Northcliffe told me he would take me into his business. From being a dictator in a business of a hundred people, I became again a "new boy" in the school of life. It was a good date for a new beginning. Treading on air, I walked back with him to Carmelite House and there and then sat down in his outer office—"Room One" of ominous memory to many employees—and wrote my first letter on Carmelite House notepaper to my father: "I have just returned from lunching with Sir Alfred. He has made me his confidential secretary and I am to sit in his private room and listen to all his conversations and interviews, so that in the event of his being away I can see people for him. He says the first six months will be more or less training, but after that he will put all sorts of things in my way. I think it will be most interesting work and if I make the most of my opportunities, I am sure I shall get on" . . . "He wants me to go on with my French and Shorthand, and he said that if I had been here this morning he would have sent me round to see Joe Chamberlain for him."

For six months I had been involved in the final worries of the postcard publishing business. This was the first piece of happy news to send home for many a day. I soon settled down in my new world—and it was a very exciting world. Northcliffe used jokingly to call Carmelite

House and his various businesses the "dog-fight." I think he meant to imply that most people were just playing for their own hand. When he offered me the job, he told me that I should frequently have to come down to Sutton Place,* and that before appointing me he had consulted Lady Northcliffe,† and that she "had spoken strongly in my favour."

In November 1904 Northcliffe started an overseas edition of the *Daily Mail*, to serve as a kind of "weekly letter from the old country" to British-born settlers throughout the Empire and the members of British communities in foreign lands. I was appointed sub-editor and among those who lent a hand with the task of putting the first issue of the new paper "to bed" was Edgar Wallace, then much preoccupied with thoughts of a detective story he was engaged upon. Starting a new paper is always a strenuous matter and I spent thirty-six hours on continuous duty, and after my night in the composing room at Carmelite House, took round, early in the morning, damp page proofs for Northcliffe's inspection at his house in Berkeley Square.

The editor of the new paper was Mr. F. Macpherson, subsequently the foreign editor of the *Daily Mail*. Northcliffe thought that the work of editing the new weekly edition would interfere with Macpherson's other duties on the *Daily Mail* itself and so two or three days later I found myself editor of the overseas edition at the age of twenty-one—a position I held till I resigned twelve years later.

For six or seven years I was a frequent visitor to the Northcliffes' beautiful home at Sutton Place, near Guildford. I much enjoyed the opportunity of meeting many of the literary and political celebrities of the day. The Chief often invited business friends at a moment's notice and had it not been for Lady Northcliffe's consummate tact they would often have felt ill at ease. When there was a large house party I slept at the gamekeeper's lodge and dressed for dinner in the Chief's room with the silent

* Now belonging to the Duke of Sutherland.

† Then Lady Harmsworth, and now Lady Hudson.

Joseph,* his Austrian valet, gliding noiselessly about. Northcliffe was just like a light-hearted young uncle or elder brother—he was seventeen years my senior—and would talk about life, politics, ambition, history, America, the “fair sex” and the Empire. In those days Northcliffe, when in good spirits, seemed extraordinarily youthful and full of vitality. I wrote from Sutton Place: “The Chief arrived back from Paris where he has been launching the Continental Edition of the *Daily Mail*. He looks the picture of health and youth. One might easily imagine that he was about twenty-seven or twenty-eight, he is so full of energy.”

The average employer would have thought it a great nuisance to have a youthful secretary using his bathroom and leaving his clothes about while changing. But the chief always made me feel that he really liked my presence. His love for youth was one of his nicest traits. An early piece of advice to me was: “Remember, my boy, when you grow older, always surround yourself with young people. businesses grow old rapidly. Make a rule never to bring in anyone from outside over the age of twenty-five.” He was always on the lookout for young men with brains and he enjoyed putting them over the heads of their seniors. No young man in Northcliffe’s employ could complain that he was not given plenty of scope for initiative. The Chief sometimes advanced young men too rapidly and in the first flush of enthusiasm made promises which were not carried out. The cynics in the office, when some recently-discovered youthful genius was introduced by the Chief, used to smile knowingly and wonder how long the newcomer would survive the trials which awaited him later on, when the sun was no longer shining, and when he had to make his way painfully through the valley of discouragement and disapproval.

When I arrived at Carmelite House, I was suffering from an inferiority complex, and I can never think of Northcliffe without a deep sense of gratitude for his belief in me from the start, and to him more than to anyone I

* Joseph, I am glad to say, is still alive, and I had a letter from him from Austria recently.

owe it that within a year I had largely forgotten my initial business failure. Shortly after I joined his staff I went for a walk with him. We were at Hyde Park Corner going into the Park. He said "My dear boy, in after years, you will look back on those three postcard years with gratitude, they have been a very useful experience."

As an instance of Northcliffe's kindness to young men, I will give a personal experience. During my postcard career, just after my twenty-first birthday, I had been persuaded into "backing a bill," or giving some form of guarantee to a business associate, never expecting that I would be called upon to meet the guarantee. The sum involved was eight hundred pounds. I had too light-heartedly signed the document. My mistake resulted in a sudden claim for eight hundred pounds, nine months after I had joined Northcliffe's staff and just when I was beginning to make progress in my new career. I passed several sleepless nights and had visions of the bankruptcy court. I made a resolution then never to back a bill or enter into financial obligations lightly, even to oblige a friend—a resolution which I am glad to say I have kept ever since.

I turned to Northcliffe in my trouble. He told me he would never let me go through the bankruptcy court at the outset of my career. I was sent round to see a mutual friend, old Sir George Lewis, the cleverest solicitor in England. There was no way out. My signature was on that piece of paper. I must pay up. Northcliffe paid the eight hundred pounds forthwith. I was to start repaying out of my salary at the rate of four pounds a week. In a couple of years, when I had repaid half the amount, Northcliffe let me off the remainder. He said he would have let me off paying sooner, only he wanted to see that I really meant to carry out my side of the bargain. Fine training for a young man. But more than that, it deepened the affection and admiration of the young man for his chief and for five years Northcliffe remained my hero.

During my first week-end at Sutton Place in 1903, Northcliffe first took me out in his Mercedes, a big

snorting monster that stood outside the front hall and almost jumped off its wheels every time it breathed. It was like a panting animal longing to be off on the chase. Pine, the lame mechanic and ex-gunner—who remained with Northcliffe till his death, and was, I am glad to say, left a nice income by the Chief—kept looking into the bonnet of the car and adjusting things, and the monster became quieter at his magic touch.

Pine was a wonderful driver and never took risks. I have driven with him in the South of France at nearly a hundred miles an hour without a pang of fear. The last time I saw Pine, he was looking into a shop window in St. James's Street after Northcliffe's death. We discussed old times, and as we parted he said "There will never be anyone like him." Which proves that a great man can remain a hero after twenty years to his chauffeur.

But to return to that first drive. We put on French motoring coats with the fur outside, caps and goggles. The car was an open two-seater with a splash-board on which Pine wedged himself, though how he managed to cling on I shall never understand. Northcliffe drove, and the empty seat next the driver was pointed to me: the monster's snorting drowned all human voices. Great leather straps, looking like belts, kept his armour in place. The Chief was a fine driver. In an hour and a half we flew over the surface of half southern England. I clung to my seat. The wind roared past us. I felt as if my eyebrows were being blown off as the air rushed through the chinks of my goggles. I parted my lips for a second, and such was the force of the wind that I had difficulty in closing them.

We flew through Guildford—it was before the days of police patrols, and there was little traffic on the roads on Sunday morning—up the Hog's Back at sixty miles an hour, on to Godalming, Farnborough, and I didn't know where else. We never stopped, we never talked. How I prayed for villages and sharp turns when we had to slow down! At 11.30 I stumbled out of the car at the front door of Sutton Place with knees and legs aching from the tension of pressing against the

floor, with a face tingling from the wind, and with a great sense of relief. Before long I enjoyed drives in the Mercedes with the Chief as much as he did, and was ashamed of my fears on that first trip.

Some day Northcliffe will find his Boswell; hitherto none of the biographers has done justice to his many-sided personality and his magnetism. Like most of us, Northcliffe had two sides to his character, but during those early years I but rarely saw the Hyde—it was the Jekyll that I met. One of the most attractive things about him was his love for his mother. He had a profound devotion and reverence for her. She could nearly always get him to do what she wanted. When she thought he was overworking and had too many responsibilities she said so. She told him she thought he ought to get rid of the *Daily Mirror* and he got rid of it, selling it to Lord Rothermere. In Spain or America, when parted from her, he used to send her a daily cable of love and news. Once, when I was recovering from typhoid fever at Toronto in 1908, he brought his mother to see me, and recounted with evident amusement, as typical of her Puritan stubbornness, the fact that when they were at Washington, his mother had refused to visit Mount Vernon, Washington's home, where the great man is buried, because she "would not pay tribute to a rebel."

During my first few years with Northcliffe, he knew how to command the devotion of his entourage. I had not been with him a year before he sent me to Switzerland for ten days' winter sports because he thought I was run down. He began calling me by my Christian name a few weeks after I joined him. One October day in 1904, he asked me to come and sweep up leaves with him for exercise, on the big lawns at Sutton Place; he had not as yet begun to play golf. He told me then and on many subsequent occasions of the future he had planned out for me. He told me that my present jobs, of acting as his secretary and as Editor of the Overseas Edition of the *Daily Mail*, were minor jobs, and that in four or five months he wanted me to help him in really big things. Another

evening I drove back with him in his electric brougham from Carmelite House to Berkeley Square,* and he told me he wanted me to become a kind of "overseer" for the whole business and that ultimately he hoped to give me the position which he had "offered to his brother, St. John,† at Beaulieu last year." I had been staying with the Chief in the South of France the previous year and in my diary I wrote that evening: "At that time last year I well remember I vowed I would try my best to have that offer made to me and it looks like speedier realisation than I had ever dared hope." On March 21st, 1905, Northcliffe saw my father and told him that he would send me to Paris to work on the new Continental *Daily Mail*, which he was about to establish.

Within a year of my joining the staff, I was appointed assistant to Mr. Charles Watney, then foreign news editor of the *Daily Mail*, or assistant news editor as I preferred to call myself. Northcliffe said I could learn more about daily journalism under Watney than from anyone else in England. The Chief also said I was to remain in the job for a year. Less than a month later, I was summoned to Room One and Northcliffe told me that he was going to appoint me editor of the *Weekly Dispatch*. He told me that three or four fortunes had been made on the *Weekly Dispatch* and that there was room for another one, and that it would be a fine two or three years' training for me. "Of course, you are rather young," he said,‡ "but after all I was the same age when I conducted a newspaper" (I was twenty-two and six months). My reign as editor of the *Weekly Dispatch* was short lived, exactly four months. I have forgotten how long my successor survived, but I do not think that anyone occupied the editorial chair for long until Mr. Hannen Swaffer arrived upon the scene. But it was no disgrace to have been editor of the *Weekly Dispatch*, and the number of ex-editors must have been considerable. There were jokes in Carmelite House about the suggestion of giving a dinner

* Lord Northcliffe then lived at No. 36, Berkeley Square, next door to Lord Rosebery.

† St. John Harmsworth, the owner of Perrier Water, who died in 1933.

‡ As noted in my diary of April 4th, 1905.

to the ex-editors of the *Dispatch*, "only that no dining-room in Fleet Street was large enough to hold them."

Charles Watney had the reputation of being a hard task-master, but I always found him a very considerate tutor and in my month under him I learnt much about daily journalism. My hours were from four in the afternoon till two or three in the morning, and after my work I used to bicycle back through the deserted streets to Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park. Apart from helping Watney in any way I could during his absence for dinner, my job consisted in sending the reporters out on "a story" if I thought there was "news" in it. Not a very pleasant task for a young man, when the reporters, tired after a long day's work, were probably thinking of going home after handing in their copy—a murder in the West-end, a motor accident in a lonely part of Berkshire (motor smashes were news in those days), an escaped lion in Sussex—were all in the nightly round. When in a quandary as to the importance of the happening from the "news" standpoint, I would go and consult old hands like kind Frank Dilnot, or even sometimes Tom Marlowe, the managing-editor, and one of the nicest men anyone could have had for his superior officer.

Watney was a human machine, he never stopped working. He usually put in fifteen hours a day at his desk. It was a bad day for Carmelite House when Northcliffe parted with him a few years later. The work I liked best was sending cable instructions to our foreign correspondents in far parts of the world. One evening I noted in my diary that I had to draft cables costing £120 giving instructions to our representatives in Java, Sumatra and Borneo as to the reporting of the movements of the Russian Fleet. The job was extremely interesting, but I was not sorry when it came to an end, for I had found the night work trying as I was not able to sleep on in the mornings.

When my friends in Carmelite House heard of my appointment to the *Weekly Dispatch*, I came in for much chaff, and there was betting on the length of my tenure of the editorial chair. On April 11th I took up my new duties, and I noted in my diary "The news editor and

sub-editors naturally regard me with some suspicion." The following week I wrote a leading article on "Britain's Increasing Sobriety," a column of "chat," reviewed Frederic Harrison's *Life of Chatham* and put the paper to press. The Chief was well pleased with my first few papers, so all seemed plain sailing. But clouds soon began to gather on the horizon, and a declining circulation continued to decline.

I was never really happy on the *Dispatch*. I felt like a square peg in a round hole. Crime occupied a large place in the life of the editor of a Sunday newspaper. I attended my one and only, I hope, murder trial when two brothers, the "mask murderers," were condemned to death. I can still see those two poor young men, one of whom kept passing his tongue over his parched lips, being condemned by the judge "to be hanged by the neck and buried in the prison grounds." I wrote home that during the absence of the jury "people were talking and laughing just as if we were present at the *entr'acte* of an ordinary play," and that "we bought a long story concerning the last days of the two poor brothers who are going to be hanged on Tuesday and also copies of the last letters they have written to their relatives. Their whole story is most tragic. This part of journalism, profiting by such news as this, I do not like."

Evidently I was not meant for the editorship of a popular Sunday newspaper. By the middle of July, three months later, Northcliffe said: "After a few more months' experience on the *Weekly Dispatch*, I am going to put you on the *Observer*, as I want you to learn that side of journalism"—a proposal which was never carried out. Friends warned me that I was ill-advised to go for a long summer holiday and that I would find someone else in the editorial chair on my return. I was not sufficiently enamoured of the job to pay attention to their warnings. The last issue of the *Weekly Dispatch* for which I was responsible was that of August 13, 1905. A few days later I left for Sweden by steamer from Tilbury to spend my holiday with Sir Rennell* and Lady Rodd at Stockholm, where he was

* Now Lord Rennell of Rodd.

then British Minister. On my return my successor was sitting in the editorial chair of the *Weekly Dispatch*.

After several happy weeks with the Rodds and their delightful young family on the island of Tegalön, an hour by boat from Stockholm, General Edward Stuart Wortley and I went to Finland and St. Petersburg. I was glad to have another opportunity of going to Russia, as the political situation was more than usually tense, since "Red Sunday" in the previous January and the recent murder of the Grand Duke Sergius in Moscow. I had expected to find at St. Petersburg great enthusiasm over the conclusion of peace, but probably interest in the war had receded owing to preoccupation with the political events nearer home. The only outward sign to remind us that there had been a war was the gathering on the platform of Peterhof railway station of many generals and high dignitaries in uniform. They had been attending the State ceremony when the Tsar had proclaimed peace between Russia and Japan at the palace.

I do not know how far the following extract, taken from my diary of Monday, January 23rd, 1905, written in London, entitled me to rank as a prophet, but I give it for what it was worth:

"The news of the Great Revolution at St. Petersburg came through to-day. Over 2,000 people were shot down in cold blood yesterday by the Cossacks. The Tsar kept out of the way and missed the greatest chance he will have in his whole life, of going down to posterity as the greatest Russian ruler. I cannot conceive how any man could so signally lose his opportunity. This must certainly sow the seeds for a greater revolution which will eventually liberate the people, though I do not think the time has yet come for that upheaval."

But when I was in St. Petersburg six months later, I think I invested the Tsarist régime with greater wisdom and more liberal tendencies than it possessed. But autocrats are not easily moved, and the general strike a month after my visit was required to force the hands of the Tsar and his advisers. The following month the Tsar issued the famous manifesto promising a Constitution based on modern liberal principles. Six months later,

the Emperor opened the first Duma of the Russian Empire.

As I look back on Russia, as it was in those days, with its intense religious fervour, with the almost universal veneration of the moujik (peasant) for the Tsar, "the little father," it seems impossible that this mighty Empire has been overthrown. In no country in the world did the visitor have a greater feeling of security. The Government was all-powerful. In the remotest parts of the Empire, on the frontiers of Armenia, in Poland, in Finland, on the Black Sea, the Russian policeman maintained order. Russian officers and Russian soldiers were everywhere. If the Great War had never taken place, the Tsar would probably still be on his throne.

On my return to London, I lunched with Count Benckendorff at Chesham House (the Russian Embassy) and we discussed my recent impressions. The Ambassador was very pessimistic, especially about the Baltic Provinces. "Count B. said that we over here do not realise that the revolutionary movement has no longer the introduction of wise reform for its object, but is extreme socialism in its worst form," I wrote in my diary. To this day, despite the accounts of eye witnesses and talks with actors in the drama, like M. Kerensky, I have never understood just how the whole structure of the ancient régime came tumbling down so quickly.

My wanderings round the Baltic once again stimulated my wanderlust, and I had no sooner returned to London than I began to make plans for a journey to Canada and the United States at the first possible opportunity. Soon after I joined his staff the previous year, Northcliffe had said he would take me to America with him. I was bitterly disappointed when he subsequently changed his mind. My travels again stirred my desire to acquire foreign languages, which has always been a passion with me. I was fairly fluent in German, and for many years frequently wrote my diary in it, but my French was woefully inadequate, and I had only smatterings of "tourist" Russian and Italian. On my return to London I took several series of lessons at the Berlitz School in Chancery Lane, alternating Russian and Italian, usually going there

from nine to ten in the morning before my day's work at Carmelite House, for it was the only time in the day when my brain was sufficiently fresh. I was also trying to brush up my French. In December I was writing my diary in tourist Italian. If my progress was not very rapid, I think it was because I was attempting too much, and I would have been better advised to have tried one language at a time.

The mental strain, and my increasing work and responsibilities, forced me a couple of years later to leave Russian and Italian aside for a long time. It was not till 1927 that I seriously took up Russian again, and after five years of an hour's daily reading, a linguaphone talking to me while I shaved, and two weekly lessons with my Russian friend, Miss Ivanova, I have attained moderate fluency. I have read most of the Russian classics in the original which I felt more than compensated me for my efforts. I do not think the Anglo-Saxon can understand the Russian soul and character without a knowledge of a Slav language.

Shortly after my return to London, in October 1905, I left Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park, and went to live with a Belgian family at 139, Warwick Street, Pimlico. The family consisted of Monsieur Coussement, a retired business man and his elderly unmarried daughter, who had spent most of her life as governess in England. Although he had lived several years in England, M. Coussement did not speak a word of English! His chief excitements each day were a visit to the foreign newspaper shop near Victoria, where he bought his copy of *Le Journal*, and taking my rough-haired fox-terrier, Jock, for his daily constitutional. When I left, I made him a present of Jock, who was very fond of him. Here I remained for two years. While we always talked French at breakfast and dinner, I did not make as much headway as I ought because I was frequently out to dinner.

A few days after my return from Russia Northcliffe told me he had other work for me to do, apart from the editorship of the overseas edition of the *Daily Mail*. No reference was made to the *Weekly Dispatch*, nor to my successor in the editorial chair. I was made a Director

of *The World*, which he had recently acquired, and I was told that my job was to "buck it up" and act as his representative on the paper. I used to spend every Thursday in the offices of *The World* in York Street, Covent Garden, discussing schemes with Albert Laker, the manager, who had been a friend of Edmund Yates and Gerald Campbell, the genial editor.* I produced various ideas which, thanks to the friendly co-operation of my colleagues, were successful. I suggested a 4th of June Number, a Warwick Pageant Number, and a Cowes Number. Our returns (unsold copies) decreased and "for the first time for 18 years *The World* circulation has stopped falling," I wrote in my diary. In connection with the details of the Warwick Pageant special number, I had to go and see Lady Warwick. "She looked most attractive in a white dress. It was all I could do," I wrote, "to keep my attention fixed on the business about which I had come to see her."

Northcliffe was pleased with our success. But he had larger fish to fry when the possibility of acquiring *The Times* became practical politics. He disposed of his interests in *The World* to a colleague two or three years later. He soon moved me back on to his personal staff to act as a kind of "watch-dog" for him in addition to my other duties. One of my jobs consisted in giving him a daily digest of all the daily papers with my criticisms of the contents of each morning's *Daily Mail*. Northcliffe used to keep a staff of watch-dogs for this purpose. His critics were drawn from all walks of life, and ranged from telephone operators to golf professionals. By these means he learnt what the man in the street thought of his papers, and armed with these anonymous lists of criticisms and suggestions, without, of course, stating which of his watch-dogs was responsible for the suggestion, he would confront the editorial staff. I find a typical entry in my diary: "The *Mail* was not very exciting this morning, and the Chief went upstairs armed with my list to create a disturbance, I expect."

I do not want to give the impression that Northcliffe

* Died in the summer of 1933.

for long depended on any one source for his views as to the readableness of his papers. He relied on his own judgment, and he had an uncanny flair as to what the public wanted. His morning papers were specially delivered to him by six o'clock, and while many of his staff were still asleep, he would be noting in his large round handwriting his comments on his bundle of papers. Supplies of well-sharpened blue and soft black pencils were always kept by his bedside for the purpose. From nine o'clock when the telephone bell began to ring, each member of his staff took up the receiver with feelings of apprehension. What would the Chief's comments be this morning, and "would the 'old man' be in a good humour?" If the telephone conversation was unpleasant and if there were hard words of criticism from the Chief, the individual concerned would set out for the office with a heavy heart. Probably the very next day the Chief would be in the best of spirits, and would make a point of bestowing praise. No one could be more generous in his praise. Nothing escaped Northcliffe's eye. He had an uncanny power of digesting the contents of *The Times* or *The Daily Mail* in a quarter the time that it took any ordinary mortal to read through the paper.

I had many odd jobs to do apart from my regular duties. Within a year of joining the staff I was lucky enough to get my first "news scoop" for the *Daily Mail*, for which in addition to Northcliffe's thanks, I received ten guineas. Lord Fitzwilliam, who was an old friend of my father's, was due to return from his treasure-hunting expedition to the Cocos Islands off the South American coast. The *Orinoco* of the Royal Mail Line was expected at Plymouth on a certain date. I suggested to Marlowe that I should go down to Plymouth and attempt to get Lord Fitzwilliam's own story. My plan was enthusiastically approved. I took the precaution to get a letter of introduction from the Chairman of the Royal Mail Company. The letter worked wonders. I was the only stranger permitted on the tender; all the star reporters of Fleet Street gnashed their teeth on shore while I had a two hours' talk with Lord Fitzwilliam in the Captain's cabin of the *Orinoco*.


A waiting tug took me back to catch the London express long before the passengers had disembarked. In the train I wrote out my scoop and waited at the office till midnight to correct my copy. I much enjoyed my excursion, and had visions of emulating Charlie Hands, Edgar Wallace, Harold Begbie, Hamilton Fyfe, or one of the other "specials." My stock began to rise. Friends became more friendly, time-servers who had been waiting to see which way the cat was going to jump, definitely decided that as I was in the "old man's good books," it was policy to keep in with me. I enjoyed my popularity and had visions of living in a land of eternal sunshine.

For a young man who liked novelty mine was an ideal position. I never knew what my next job would be. One day Northcliffe came to me and said he was sure that the big public would support Grand Opera if it was brought within its reach. He decided to make a *Daily Mail* experiment and we took Covent Garden Opera House one evening and gave a performance at popular prices, with many European stars on the bill. Of course, the experiment did not prove anything, because with the *Daily Mail's* pulling power behind it, any entertainment could have been made successful. To me was entrusted the task of writing up the forthcoming performance and acting as impresario and general manager. I spent a hectic week in a new world behind the footlights, and for a few days at least my colleagues were Neil Forsyth of the Grand Opera Syndicate, musical directors, temperamental Grand Opera singers, and stage managers. The performance was a great success and Northcliffe was delighted.

Another experience, which in retrospect has often caused me amusement, but at the time was slightly embarrassing, was an attempt to interview some of the princes of finance and industry in London. In after years Northcliffe used to make me re-tell the story for the enjoyment of his guests, as an instance of the method he used "of testing my young men by giving them impossible jobs to do, to see what kind of stuff they are made of." That morning an article by Marie Corelli appeared in the *Daily Mail*, entitled "The Sorrows of a

Millionaire." The Chief rang me up and said he would lend me his car, and that I was to put on my fur coat and top hat, and go round and interview for the *Daily Mail* as many millionaires as possible on the burden of riches. Nothing daunted, I set out on my rounds.

The millionaires proved elusive fry. "His lordship regrets he is engaged"—"Sir Thomas Midas is at a Board Meeting"—and the door was politely shut in my face. But I succeeded in getting interviews with Lord Strathcona, Mr. Ludwig Neumann and Lord Pirrie. I also managed to penetrate into the Holy of Holies at New Court, St. Swithin's Lane, the office of the House of Rothschild. My card bore the title Assistant News Editor of the *Daily Mail*. My top hat, my fur coat, the smart car produced their effect. I got through the first barrage in the person of the commissionaire. By insisting that my message was for Lord Rothschild and no subordinate, I finally bluffed my way into the partners' room. Lord Rothschild was seated at the head of the boardroom table. Round him were gathered his associates who held the financial destinies of half Christendom in their hands. There was silence while I made my way to the head of the table. Lord Rothschild bowed me into the seat at his side "What did the *Daily Mail* want." Summoning up my courage, I shouted at him, for he was deaf, "Oh, Lord Rothschild, we want your views on the subject of the sorrows of a millionaire, you have no doubt read Miss Marie Corelli's article in this morning's paper." What exactly happened I cannot remember, but in an incredibly short time I found myself sunk in the cushions of Northcliffe's car bound for Carmelite House to report to the News Editor on my assignments.



CHAPTER XIII

WESTWARD BOUND

EVER since my private school days I had longed to visit the new world. In 1906 my long cherished ambition was realised. On May 16th when Northcliffe was pleased with my work on the *World* I suggested that it was essential that the editor of the Overseas Edition of the *Daily Mail* should visit Canada and the United States. He agreed and gave me two months' leave of absence and said I might charge up a third of my expenses to the office. I could hardly sleep that night from excitement. I began collecting letters of introduction. In June I went round to see Winston Churchill at the House of Commons, he was then Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office in the Liberal Government. He talked to me for over half-an-hour. "He always reads the Overseas Edition of the *Daily Mail*" (I wrote) "but thinks it has been much too partisan." Apparently my Imperialism in 1906 was of too strong a brand for a junior member of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Government. "I promised to amend my ways and try to be more impartial" records my diary. Churchill gave me a personal letter to Sir Wilfred Laurier and I gradually collected a formidable bundle of introductions. Miss Alice Balfour, an old friend of my parents, wrote to Lord Grey.

I had several talks with Lord Strathcona at the High Commissioner's Office in Victoria Street. This wonderful old man with his bushy eye-brows, his white beard and his cautious Scottish manner let down his defences. He forgot he was talking to a young journalist and saw in me someone who was equally interested in the Great Dominion in which he had achieved fame. I became so enthusiastic about Canada and my trip that I forgot discretion and held forth about the need for fast steamships between Canada and the Mother-Country. I did not mean to be

lacking in respect but linking up the Empire was my pet hobby. Lord Strathcona did not snub me as a lesser man might have done. So seventy-six and twenty-three sat down as equals planning every detail of a thirty days' pilgrimage for the latter across Canada from coast to coast. No detail was too trivial for Canada's G.O.M. and he wrote letters in his own handwriting to Sir Thomas Shaughnessy of the C.P.R., the head of the Hudson's Bay Company and others. My trip was going to use up a third of my year's salary, but what matter? I was going to see the Empire.

On June 27th "I went to see the Chief off" (I wrote home) "at Waterloo for New York, whither he is going by North German Lloyd boat. He is accompanied by a masseur, his valet, H. W. Wilson the leader writer, George Sutton, Bart Kennedy and Charles Whibley." Another time I would have been green with envy at the good fortune of the party but on this occasion I could afford to smile. In less than a month I too would have started on my voyage of discovery and I was determined to see more of the New World in two months than any British visitor had ever done.

The last three weeks were a frantic rush, I had to settle up my work so that it would not suffer in my absence. The London season was in full swing and there were visits to the opera to hear Caruso and Melba, and frequent balls including a brilliant gathering at the Duchess of Westminster's at Grosvenor House, now pulled down. For some years I went out much in society. I enjoyed meeting people whose names appeared in the papers and who achieved things. It gratified my vanity to see those large bits of pasteboard inviting me to "have the honour of meeting their Royal Highnesses so and so" stuck round my looking glass. I suppose the Indian chief regarded his scalps with somewhat similar sensations. When Royalty was present I enjoyed wearing knee breeches and silk stockings and I thought my legs looked rather nice. In my heart of hearts I despised social climbers, but I fear I was more or less of a snob. It was a proud occasion when Princess ——, a distinguished editor and a reigning

beauty dined with me in the recently opened Carlton Restaurant. I was a careerist. I might meet someone who would be of use to me. Northcliffe told me to keep in with as many people as possible in all walks of life and I did. But the London season and social ambitions soon assumed their right perspective.

Just before leaving I received a cable from Northcliffe telling me to see Lord Atholstan, the proprietor of the *Montreal Star* in Montreal as he would probably put the job of supplying Canada with better Imperial news in my hands. The problems of Empire unity absorbed me more and more.

I sailed for Canada on July 20th, 1906. No young emigrant in the steerage was more excited than I was. When we were half-way across the Atlantic I went one morning into the cabin of the Marconi operator. Just as I walked in he was taking down a wireless message from our sister ship the *Empress of Britain* only eighty miles away—it was for me from Northcliffe, who was on his way home. "How did brother's accident occur and what is nature of operation to be performed. Hope you will enjoy well deserved holiday dear Evelyn." The message referred to the terrible accident twelve days before which his favourite brother St. John, had met with while motoring at night. His chauffeur had mistaken a white bank for the road and St. John's back was broken. Poor St. John was an heroic invalid and for thirty years he was paralysed from the waist down. He built up the big business of Perrier Water and only died last year. His brother's accident affected Northcliffe more than anything that ever happened to him. I do not think he was ever quite the same again.

Quebec reminded me of an old world French provincial town with its winding streets and French inscriptions. I walked up and down Dufferin Terrace after dinner till nearly midnight in the soft night air. The lights on the shipping on the St. Lawrence far below twinkled magically. The romance of Empire took hold of me.

Within twenty-six hours of my arrival I found myself talking to the French-Canadian Premier of the Dominion.

I had always wanted to meet Sir Wilfrid Laurier since I had first heard him make a wonderful after-dinner speech in London. I had several letters of introduction to him and the opportunity came sooner than I expected as he happened to be staying at the Château Frontenac Hotel where I was spending my first days on Canadian soil. Such was his tact, that somehow or other, he gave me the impression that he was as much interested in our conversation as I was, though the views of a young English journalist of twenty-three, who plied him with questions for the best part of forty minutes, could not have been particularly interesting.

Sir Wilfrid was an imposing figure. He had a quick intelligent face, with a rather narrow forehead, a bald crown to his head, rendered all the more angular by the tufts of grey hair which were brushed out over each temple. His hair somewhat reminded me of the Rev. R. J. Campbell's, then at the height of his fame at the City Temple. The chief impression he made on me was that of shrewdness, a born politician. Thirty years ago he was *the* outstanding personality in Canadian politics. I did not consider then that he was a leader of men, in which I was probably wrong. He had not the personal magnetism of Alfred Deakin or General Botha. With more or less consternation I learnt from our talk that he was not an Imperialist in my sense of the word. His inclinations were unquestionably more in the direction of *a union between all the nations of the Anglo-Saxon world* as advocated by Andrew Carnegie and others. On getting back to my room I thus wrote down the substance of our talk.

"An Anglo-Saxon Imperialism, which leaves out of its reckoning one of the most important sections of the race," he remarked, "cannot be said to rest on the surest foundation. How can you leave out the United States with its population to-day of 80,000,000 and fifty years hence double that number?" On the subject of tariffs he said "We will never let in British goods duty free." I came away from my talk with an uncomfortable sensation. Here was a Frenchman to whom my vision of the British Empire dominating the world, did not appeal. He believed

in an even larger vision. In future always at the back of my mind was the haunting knowledge of this dual problem. How were we to organise the far-flung sections of the British Empire to greatest mutual advantage, and at the same time, how best promote understanding between the two sections of the English-speaking race? It is curious that I largely owe to a Frenchman the conception of English-speaking unity—a cause for which I have worked ever since. “His manner is essentially that of the *grand seigneur*” (I wrote home) “but nevertheless he was as nice as he could be to me and I did not feel a scrap nervous.”

From Quebec I went to Montreal and there had my first experience of after-dinner speaking. The editor of the *Montreal Star* invited me to spend the evening at a Canadian “Wembley” on the banks of the St. Lawrence. A supper was being given by the Exhibition authorities to the Press of Montreal. This was my introduction to the cocktail—a nice innocent looking concoction served in a small glass, on which there appeared to be a rim of frost; it was golden and contained an olive at the end of a tooth-pick. We toasted the Empire and ourselves. It was all great fun. What a glorious world it was. After the toast of the King, as the only visiting British journalist, my health was proposed. I felt elated, the right words would not always come, but apparently my eloquent tributes to Canada’s great future and the place that “God’s own Country” was destined to fill among the nations of the world, were just what was required. I sat down amid a storm of applause and tried to neutralise the effects of the cocktails by drinking large quantities of Canadian Radnor Water—like Apollinaris or Perrier. After my first initiation into trans-Atlantic hospitality I grew wary, and in future I never took more than two “refreshers” before meals.

“Whether Canada is ultimately destined to form part of the British Empire, is a question I will not go into here,” I wrote in my diary, “but the symbol presented by this little gathering of sixty journalists drinking the health of King Edward, who lives 3,000 miles away and whom they have for the most part never seen, could not

but give one a thrill. Besides that the background was so romantic—big dark trees with a bright moon, shining on the mighty St. Lawrence just beyond.”

Among my Montreal meetings was an hour with Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, the President of the Canadian Pacific Railway and a force in Canadian life. To listen to Sir Thomas extolling Canada and the British Empire one would never have suspected that he was born in the United States of Irish parentage. We discussed the need for a better cable service of British news, for in those days most of the British news appearing in the Canadian Press came to Canada *via* New York. The C.P.R. did things in grand style. Sir Thomas pressed a button and when his secretary appeared told him that I was to be provided with “a station to station” pass which would enable me to travel free of charge anywhere on the C.P.R. system.

The red-letter day of my Canadian trip was when I first met Lord Grey, the Governor-General. The days I spent at Rideau Hall are among my happiest pre-war memories. No young Empire enthusiast could have failed to have been attracted by Lord Grey. He was utterly unlike one's preconceived notions of a viceroy. His smile was infectious and he was full of vitality; indeed his family sometimes shook their heads over the multitude of his enthusiasms. The moment I went into his library I felt at home and we plunged into a discussion on the future organisation of the Empire. I told Lord Grey that I would respect his confidence and that I was not trying to interview him. He laughingly replied: “Very well, I shall treat you as a gentleman and not a journalist, not that I wish to imply all journalists are not gentlemen.” One of my greatest joys was to listen to Lord Grey's personal reminiscences of Cecil Rhodes and his life in South Africa. Lord Grey had only recently come to Canada and was full of enthusiasm for the great Dominion. The welfare of the Empire was to him a sacred cause, and he expressed the dual allegiance of the Canadian citizen by the phrase “The Empire is my country, Canada is my home.” Lord Grey introduced me to the youthful Deputy-Minister of Labour in the Canadian Government,

a Mr. Mackenzie King, who had come up to receive the C.M.G. from the Governor-General's hands; he referred to Mackenzie King as "my friend, the future Prime Minister of Canada." It is not often that political prophecies of this kind come true.

We discussed methods by which more enthusiasm for the Empire might be aroused in the hearts of the French-Canadian population. We debated every manner of scheme for drawing together the far-flung sections of the Empire, quicker mail services, reduced magazine postage, a better distribution of British newspapers, organised exchanges of schoolboys, professors and journalists from one part of the Empire to the other, the despatch of qualified British speakers to the Dominions, the desirability of appointing Canadians, Australians and South Africans to the Imperial Diplomatic, Consular, Colonial and Indian Civil Services, the need in London for organised effort to make visitors from the Dominions feel at home; an all-British cable service round the world and an increased Canadian contribution to the Imperial Navy. There was hardly a subject, which appeared on the agenda of subsequent Imperial Conferences, which we did not discuss. Lord Grey told me that his chief desire since he came to Canada had always been to stimulate the National Spirit in Canadians, one must work through Nationalism to a real partnership in the British Empire. I was sad when I had to take leave of my host to catch the "Imperial Limited" on its westward journey to Winnipeg.

As I boarded the "Imperial Limited" I felt charged with inexhaustible supplies of energy for the Imperial cause. Every time I passed a fluttering Canadian flag the blood coursed more quickly through my veins. I put my ideas down on paper as to the kind of Empire Organisation I should like to create. When I started out on my Empire Crusade six years later my views had changed very considerably, although my devotion to the Empire was never more intense. My vision was that of a Commonwealth of Free States. This is the document as it was written on board the "Imperial Limited" in August 1906:

This morning Lord Grey gave me the most interesting document to look at, which it has ever been my good fortune to read. It was the statement which Cecil Rhodes wrote on the South African veldt in the year 1875, when but twenty-two years old, giving his ideas on Imperialism and the best methods to advance the British Empire. Rhodes thought the best means to attain this end would be the establishment of an enormous Secret Society, with branches to extend eventually to every end of the earth.

This remarkable document closes with the statement that should he—Rhodes—die at a premature age he wished all his worldly goods to be applied by a friend and the Secretary of State for the Colonies to put into practice this idea. The opening sentences of the reflections of the great Empire builder at the age of twenty-two are so pregnant with interest and so inspiring to the young Briton that I give them word for word as I copied them in Lord Grey's study at Government House this morning :

"It often strikes a man to enquire what is the chief good in life. To one the thought comes that it is a happy marriage, to another great wealth, and as each seizes on his idea, for that he more or less works for the rest of his existence. To myself, thinking over the same question the wish came to me to render myself useful to my country."

Surely at no time in the history of the British Empire has an equal opportunity presented itself to the practical Imperialist. Here in Canada one sees the young Canadian nation, just beginning to realise the possibilities which this great land has before it. Canada is going through the period in which its character is being formed. It is now, therefore, that a unique opportunity is offered of helping the citizens of Canada to attain a splendid National manhood, to awaken in every one of them the sense of belonging to a united nation. But the citizenship of a Canadian must not stop here, above and beyond parochial considerations his spirit must soar, he must remember that gigantic though Canada is, she is but one of the self-governing States of the British Empire. Let him by all means be a good Canadian first, and by so doing he will be performing his duty as a citizen of a world Empire.

There are many ways in which this National and Imperial spirit can be fostered outside any commercial ties. I feel I have too little experience to be able to make up my mind as yet as to the permanent benefits to be derived from Protection. In the first place, why cannot we twentieth century British citizens put into practice the germ of the idea as it appeared to Cecil Rhodes on the South African veldt thirty-one years ago?

There are at the present time too many organisations and leagues; take for instance The Royal Colonial Institute, The Victoria League, The Daughters of the Empire, The Empire League, The Empire Day Movement, The Navy League, The British-Made Goods League, and so on AD INFINITUM. What is wanted is one great Central Organisation, which would work in connection with all the subsidiary leagues and be to them just what King Edward's Hospital Fund is to the Hospitals of London. We all admit that in business to-day is the day of the combine. The argument holds good in Imperial affairs as well.

The Germans with that wonderful power of plodding have built up a Navy League of 978,000 members, and, be it remembered, a league which is only a copy of our own.

If we set ourselves out to get a membership of 1,000,000 I believe we could do it, provided, of course, we received Royal approval and the various organisations sank their petty interests. An organisation such as I suggest, whose object would be to further the British Empire, British institutions and British liberty in every possible way would, I believe, become a tremendous power to be reckoned with. With the countless object lessons we have before us of the results attained by concentration of purpose, so varied as the Salvation Army, Freemasonry, The Jesuits, Wesleyism, and, to draw a modern parallel, insufficient though it is, the German Navy League, how can we doubt that organised effort wisely and enthusiastically directed would obtain similar results? I suggest taking a figure such as a million, as it would give an object for which to work and as an incentive to further effort.

Provided one could obtain donations from one or two rich men to keep us going for a couple of years I would not suggest asking our members for subscriptions or contributions

at first, I would wait till we had got our Empire League firmly established and till it was recognised that it was becoming a power.

Some of the matters for which we could work would be :—

- (1) Better transit facilities between the parts of the Empire. Faster boats to Canada.
- (2) Reduction of postal rates on British literature.
- (3) Extension of the Imperial *id.* postage.
- (4) A better service and a cheaper one of cable news from the British Isles to Greater Britain and *VICE VERSA*.
- (5) Organised effort to make the celebration of Empire Day universal.
- (6) By every means in our power advance the cause of Colonial Nationalism—on the lines of Jebb's work.
- (7) To obtain State aid to emigration to parts of the world under the British flag.
- (8) Teaching parts of the Empire better to understand the other by means of lecturers, pamphlets, organised excursions and visits.
- (9) To help in the dissemination of British literature and magazines in all parts of the Empire and more especially in Canada, which at present relies too much for its reading matter on the United States.
- (10) To make the self-governing States of the Empire realise that they should play their part in Imperial Defence by taking up the defence of their shores and by eventually owning their own fleets.
- (11) By endeavouring to make the visits of Australians, Canadians, etc., to the Old Country pleasant.
- (12) By instilling the principle of home-made goods first, British-made goods second.
- (13) By discussing all Imperial subjects in an annual or bi-yearly Congress, including the best means of Imperial Federation.

- (14) *By urging the desirability of appointing a certain number of Canadians, Australians, South Africans to the Imperial Consular and Indian Civil Service.*
- (15) *By generally teaching the young to respect the flag and make them realise the privilege of British Citizenship.*

A poor and unknown man has built the Salvation Army to its present position in some thirty years. With influence, the power of the press behind us, and money, verily we can attain even greater results.

EVELYN WRENCH.

On a sweltering August morning the train stopped; huge electric letters bade me "Welcome to Winnipeg." I was in the Canadian West, on the platform were perspiring Britons, Americans, Germans, Italians, Jews, Swedes and Icelanders—a human melting pot in a double sense. My mind was keyed for pleasurable impressions and I got plenty of them. The "last best West" of the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia made a great appeal to me. Here was a vast territory which might be made a breeding ground for British ideals. By arousing the enthusiasm of the immigrant for Canada it should be possible to awake in him in due course a conception of the great World Empire of which he was now a subject.

Camping out in the Rockies in the Yo-ho Valley of British Columbia was a delightful experience. There were days spent in the saddle, riding along mountain tracks and past rushing torrents. I tasted the joys of camp life, of sleeping on a bed of pine needles with the sky as ceiling, and with the roar of distant waters as lullaby. Our appetites were immense. No meal prepared by Boulestin ever tasted better than those chunks of thick bacon, potatoes in their jackets, a hash of maize and camp-made bread, prepared by a Cockney cook. After supper an old-timer made the pioneer days live again. Seated round the camp fire we listened spell-bound. The yarns of great herds of bison thundering across the plains, and of "frontier" wars with the Redskins, lost nothing in the telling.

The end of the outward journey was reached at Victoria, British Columbia. It was a painful experience getting off the steamer which conveyed me from Victoria to Seattle, on the Puget Sound in the State of Washington, U.S.A. I had sorrowfully to admit that I was in a foreign land.

CHAPTER XIV

THE U.S.A. IN 1906

MY first contact with an American town had been at Niagara City. I felt bewildered. I was in a country which I expected to find more or less the same as my own, but which was entirely different. When I went into the local ice-cream parlour, a fair Nordic waitress, with an independent manner, immaculately clad in white, strolled up to my table. I asked for "an ice," and she merely looked perplexed and said in a drawling voice, "How?" I recognised then for the first time the differences between English and American speech. I was a foreigner, my English was hardly understood. I had an English accent!

During the first days that I spent in the United States every time I saw the Stars and Stripes waving in the breeze, I had a sense of physical pain. I could not bear to think that this great territory might have been British. And as I travelled across the American continent from Seattle to New York, I learnt that this English-speaking country had an outlook largely different from ours. The people that I met in train and street-car, in the "Main Streets" of the little towns of the West, did not look upon world events as I looked upon them.

My tour proper of the United States began at Seattle on the Pacific. For a first survey of the United States the journey should begin in the West and end in New York. Usually, Europeans take their impressions of the United States from the Eastern seaboard, and they never penetrate further West than Chicago. Seattle was a wonderful place. It had boundless optimism, it vibrated with vitality, the sunshine sparkled as in Southern Europe, there was rush and roar, "old" buildings, erected twenty years ago, were being pulled down to give place to new.

Seattle was a good example of the optimistic West.

Why shouldn't the citizens be optimistic? Twenty-five years previously the population had been 3,000, by 1900 it had grown to 90,000 and in 1906 had become 205,000. The chase and capture of the dollar was going on apace. Real estate values moved each night. The contented citizens thought their beloved city was well on its way to becoming "the New York of the Pacific"—their dearest wish. Providence had been kind to them, for at the moment their Southern rival, San Francisco, was busy rebuilding after the earthquake.

"Imagine a town of tall buildings," I wrote in my diary, "of skyscrapers, of gigantic telegraph poles, of clanging street-cars, of hooting automobiles, of scurrying, tall, clean-shaven slouch-hatted individuals, of enormous drays, of shrieking locomotives, of indescribable din from the building that is going on in all directions; and you have Seattle. Such trifles as moving mountains do not worry the inhabitants; in order to increase the area of the retail section of the City they are literally cutting away a hill and pulling down the modern hotel which stands on it."

Here I began to learn the lesson that the American West was so self-absorbed, that it had little time to bother about Europe. From Seattle I went by the Northern Pacific railroad to Yellowstone Park in Wyoming. In the American West there was a free and easy democratic atmosphere. The conductor of the Pullman coach spent most of his time carrying on a flirtation with a young lady passenger from Minneapolis; as I had to leave the train at Livingstone, Montana, I never knew how the romance proceeded. "Excuse the smudge," I wrote home, "but a pillow has just flown past my head as the conductor and a young lady from Minneapolis are having a pillow-fight." I wondered what the Board of Directors at Euston would have done, if one of the guards on the London and North Western Railway had been seen carrying on a flirtation with a first-class lady passenger.

From Wyoming I went to Chicago. "Billings Station on the morning of Thursday, September 6th, 1906, was a regular hell, with the temperature 100° in the shade by 11.0 a.m., about six or seven trains in the 'depôt' and no

one to tell one which was the right car to take. The huge locomotives, clanging bells all the time, kept puffing in and out, it was quite an art dodging them; there were, of course, no platforms. One of the drawbacks of travel out West is that there are no porters. I had to carry my own heavy suit case, camera, coat and umbrella, the air was heavy with coal dust—well, I shall not forget Billings. It is extraordinary how difficult it is to get information from anyone here. You literally have to extract it from them. All you get is 'yep' or 'guess not,' and then the individual you are questioning spits into the cuspidor about ten feet away, never missing his target." (*Diary*.)

"Chicago is a very wonderful city. There is an air of hustle everywhere, and, of course, it is terribly noisy. Most of the streets are paved with cobbles, the buildings are as a rule very high on the chief streets—anything up to twenty-two storeys—and the street-cars dash along, clanging their bells all the while and to add to the din, overhead railroads are whirling along just above you. To my mind the elevated railroads are the curse of the city and utterly disfigure the streets, for just above your head is the great iron structure on which the elevated runs. . . . The departmental stores are wonderful. I was taken all over the gigantic Marshall Field store, the largest in the world. Mr. Selfridge, who is now in England, was Managing Director of their wholesale department. As you may remember, he is going to open a large £1,000,000 shop in London soon."

Three things at Chicago made a deep impression on me: its buoyant optimism, the hospitality of its citizens and its love of culture. The citizens had a profound belief in their city and its future, they thought with pride that only eighty years previously the land on which it stood had been primeval forest. Their local patriotism was intense and no task was too great to be undertaken if it meant improving the city.

No passing picture of America would be complete without a reference to the wonderful educational institutions spread right across the Continent. Learning is a passion in America. I know European critics say that much of the education given in American Universities is superficial;

perhaps they may not reach the heights attained by certain European centres of learning, but in no country in the world does university life touch greater masses of the population. When pessimists in Europe shake their heads over America to-day and say that the American Union is going to break up and that the United States is not a nation, I strongly dissent. America, like the rest of the world, is going through anxious years, she has had to revise her opinions on many subjects ; undoubtedly she has problems to solve, including her relations to her negro fellow citizens. But a nation with such an educational background must in the long run triumph.

Side by side with the American enthusiasm for learning was a lack of civic sense in the large cities. The corruption in municipal politics from Tammany downwards was hard to understand. The flower of American universities went into business, the law or education, and did not regard politics, municipal or national, as a career. My American friends used to discuss with me the need for cleansing municipal politics, but, till such time as the finest type of young American was prepared to devote his life to this seemingly humdrum work, I saw little prospect of improvement. Industrial efficiency was marked ; there was a constant seeking after new methods and a readiness to scrap existing plant. In that happy age, markets seemed limitless, the world was not suffering from over-production.

Mr. Upton Sinclair had just written his famous book, *The Jungle*, which drew world attention to the conditions prevailing in Packing Town. As a travelling journalist, I had, of course, to visit the great stock yards, about three and a half miles away from the centre of Chicago. Twenty years later, at the request of Mr. Edward Swift, I again repeated the experiment ; I hope I may never again be called upon to visit a slaughter-house. After reading *The Jungle*, I was prepared for horrible sights and I saw them in plenty. I came away with the distinct impression however, that the horrible business of slaughtering animals was done as efficiently at Chicago as anywhere in the world, and the minimum of time was taken in the operation.

“ Long before I reached my destination I became con-

scious of a curious odour in the air—the wind was blowing from Packing Town,” I wrote in my diary. “It was the smell of ten thousand cowsheds added to the smell of blood. I found myself in a world of vast railway sidings, with hundreds of cattle wagons unloading their living freight into a maze of cattle pens. Stockmen were riding to and fro rounding up stock. An Irish policeman pointed the way to the visitors’ entrance. Our party consisted of twelve sight-seers; there were seven women and three children. A curious sight for young eyes, I thought, and I hoped that some day legislation would be passed prohibiting the visits of boys and girls under sixteen.

“We entered an elevator and before we knew where we were, we had arrived at the top of a huge building. As we got out the guide announced in a loud voice, ‘This way for the hog killing.’ We found ourselves on a platform about twelve feet from the ground. Here was being performed the initial process of transforming poor squealing black pigs into sausages. There was a sea of black pigs. In a ‘bottle-neck’ stood a burly negro stripped to the waist. He seized the pig by the hind leg and deftly fastened a chain, in the form of a slip knot, round it; an enormous wooden wheel, with hooks on it, caught the top end of the chain and the pig was then suspended in the air, his head downwards, slowly moving till the chain, from which he hung, got on to the level and ran along an iron rod. All this was only a matter of seconds. Just underneath us stood the actual pig killer, a ‘Polak,’ who slit the animals’ throats at the incredible rate of a thousand an hour, I was told. A solemn procession of dangling pigs, heads downwards and their throats exposed, advanced towards him. As each pig arrived just opposite, the blade of the long, thin double-edged knife flashed and disappeared into the soft neck of the pig. It was all a matter of seconds. The slowly-moving procession of pigs disappeared out of sight, where other rites were performed.

“I will not go into details on the subject of cattle killing. I had always imagined that the poor animals were killed in some great roofless enclosure, though Upton Sinclair ought to have prepared me for the spectacle. Great arc lamps

blazed down on a huge hall—the shambles. The atmosphere was stifling, the smell of blood and dung was nauseating. . . ." (*Diary*). Thirty years before, most of the slaughterers were Irish, but times had changed and the rough work in 1906 was done by Polaks and other Central Europeans or even by negroes with Irish bosses. Everywhere I was told that the Irish made splendid foremen.

The last time I was in Chicago the pole-axe was still being used for slaughtering cattle, but I hope by now that the humane pistol has been introduced. When I enquired why humane methods were not compulsory, I was informed that their introduction would mean a great slowing down of the work. But we in Great Britain have no right to criticise American slaughtering methods when only in 1933 we passed legislation making humane slaughter compulsory.

During my five visits to the United States the absence of outward poverty was striking. Although I went into the poor districts of many of the towns, I never saw slums as sordid as those existing in the East End of London, Liverpool, Glasgow and Dublin. In 1906, after travelling from the Pacific to the Atlantic, I noted down in my diary that I had "only seen one man who looked like a tramp." I did not see a single slatternly woman. I was told by one of the leading journalists in America a dozen years ago that the "problem of poverty had been solved in the United States for all time." "It practically does not exist with us and we are already beginning to wonder to what purpose we shall be able to turn on the tap of philanthropic effort in the near future." An utterance such as this seems incredible to-day.

My first introduction to American "popular" journalism was a visit to the *New York Evening Journal* office in 1906, where I was introduced to Mr. Arthur Brisbane, of the Hearst papers, who was then the highest paid editorial writer in the world. In those days, the Pink Edition of the *New York Evening Journal* was distributed by horse van. I was asked if I would like to see how a great New York evening paper distributed its editions in record time. Of course, I said "yes." I was placed in charge of the young circulation manager, an ex-newsboy of 26, who had

worked his way to his present position. He was president of the Newspaper Boys' League in New York and was on speaking terms with every urchin in the city. On this occasion the circulation manager took charge of a distribution van, and I was invited to jump up on to the driver's seat beside him. Our van was drawn by a lanky but fast mare called "Grace." Never before had I driven behind a horse at such a rate in the streets of a big city. In London we would have been had up for furious driving, but the New York "cops," in those days, seemed to be on good terms with the *Journal*. We dashed along the streets at the rate of a fire engine, round corners, over cavities in the road which would have put the streets of Moscow to shame, and in and out between street-cars. Speed was the essence of the job, as eager newsboys were impatiently awaiting the arrival of the *Journal*, and "Grace" responded nobly. When the most urgent distribution had been done, I was allowed to drive Grace, though it must be confessed at a steadier pace, which I hope did not militate against the sales of the *Journal* that afternoon.

When I got back to the *Journal* office, the Last Evening Edition was being printed, and I went down to the publishing office. Inside the publishing office men, stripped to the waist, stood alongside a counter protected by a grating. On the other side of the grating, in the courtyard, swayed a surging mass of small boys and girls, Jews, Russians, Poles, Italians, and Irish. They fought like cats and dogs to get near the opening from which the papers were being distributed. The perspiring men inside kept handing out bundles of papers still damp from the presses. In their zeal some of the more adventurous children climbed along a ledge only to be knocked down by one of the men. In a moment a heap of boys was on the floor, several picked themselves up with bleeding noses. No one bothered. After a temporary lull, on came the pack, yelling and yapping like fiends possessed, till they were thrown their daily bundle of papers, for the sale of which they made 20 or 30 cents each evening, when off they rushed.

Twenty-eight years ago a visit to the New York underworld was more or less of an adventure. My journalistic

friends were well in with the police and I was put in the charge of a lanky American, of Irish parentage, who was the captain in charge of one of the worst districts. The power of the police was great. We were taken to many saloons, famous in underworld life, to rough dancing establishments and to China Town.

We started our round by a visit to a Chinese theatre with an entirely Chinese audience of five hundred. To my western eyes the performance seemed to consist chiefly in the clanging of gongs, of shouting and gesticulating. Through a slit in the scenery on the stage, I was able to watch the intent expression on the faces of the audience. That sea of Chinese faces, whose owners were unaware that they were being watched by a foreigner, was alone worth a visit to New York. It was not a show just got up for tourists; my Irish escort and myself were the only white men present.

I was next taken to Chinese tenements, where men lay about like dogs, and where murders take place, which the world at large never hears about. My police friend took me down one dark and evil-smelling passage with a low den at the end. After loud knocking a scowling Chinaman opened the door. Round the room was a divan, on which were lying Chinamen in a state of coma. Two Chinamen were preparing curious smelling food. Everything was mysterious in the half-light; at times I wondered if the majesty of authority, as represented by the Irish police captain, was sufficient protection. On hearing the police captain's knock, the opium pipes had been hidden away. In the dim light the inmates leered at us.

In an evil-smelling court outside was a group of the Salvation Army. Their ministrations were certainly needed. From here we went to the rooms of a prosperous Chinese merchant and his white American wife. She was a confirmed opium smoker. The walls were covered with Chinese ornaments, and she was reclining on a couch puffing her opium pipe. She was a comely woman, but had a look of unutterable sadness in her eyes. She was, of course, looked down upon by her fellow Americans. She smoked twelve opium pipes a day, she told me. She made

up a pipe and offered it to me. I took one puff just for the sake of saying that I had smoked opium. It had a heavy clammy taste, rather like strong tobacco and coffee.

When in America I used to study the point of view of Irish Americans, and Americans of non-British descent. Englishmen frequently take their views of America from the leaders of the "New York 400," and from members of the fashionable clubs in the Eastern cities. These classes are definitely pro-British and understand the British point of view, but they are not America. To understand the composite American nation, with its varied racial strains, it is necessary to go further afield. Thirty years ago there was a woeful ignorance of the British Empire and modern conditions in Great Britain; there was also hostility to things British throughout large sections of the population, in part at least due to Irish propaganda. Alas, all Irishmen in America were not like saintly Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore, one of the most beautiful characters it has ever been my privilege to know. An hour spent with him in the library of his house at Baltimore is a treasured memory. If the Irish delegates in Anglo-Irish discussions had been men like Cardinal Gibbons, many bitter pages in the joint history of the two sister islands would have been unwritten.

In the United States the tragedy of national misunderstandings strikes home. Here the Englishman can best study the story of Anglo-Irish discords, a story that goes back 700 years, with its long list of error and hate on both sides. What has been that evil fate which has kept the Irish and British races apart? Each of them has gifts complementary to the other. Despite the extremists, each needs the other, and when they meet away from the background of politics, they soon become friends. The student of British-American relations in the United States thirty years ago had to include Anglo-Irish relations in his survey, because east, west, north and south he came upon Irish influence and its relentless propaganda against Great Britain.

As an antidote to some of my contacts with Irish-American politicians and other anti-British elements, I

would go and stay with American friends whose ancestors had been a couple of hundred years in the country. In their homes my perspective would become adjusted. If one had to admit the existence of large anti-British sections of the people, it was equally true that there were powerful and increasing forces working for English-speaking understanding. As I sat in the libraries of my American friends and looked at the books by British authors on their shelves, and discussed world problems, I became convinced that the British and American nations must ultimately work together. They had a background of common tradition, common law, common literature, despite surface differences; there was an identity of outlook in many things which was fundamental.

American hospitality should have a chapter to itself. It is wonderful. When the Englishman returns home he does not know how to requite the many kindnesses showered on him. In every town he visits he is made an honorary member of half-a-dozen clubs. What can he do for his American friends in London?

I returned to Fleet Street from my trans-Atlantic experiences with wider horizons. My chief interests now were trying to promote the unity of the British Empire, and to improve the relations between the British Empire and the United States. My idea of starting an Empire Society had to be put away in my office drawer. There it remained for four years. In the turmoil of Fleet Street, my New World experiences became just a happy memory, but the vision of the Federation of the Empire, as it had flashed upon my mind under Canadian skies, remained.

Now began six busy years when I started to climb the ladder of material success. My work became more varied. I dropped out of daily journalism. My last reporting job was interviewing Mr. Alfred Vanderbilt. "The Chief rang me up on the telephone just before lunch," I wrote home, "and told me he wanted me to get an interview with Alfred Vanderbilt, the young millionaire sportsman who is going to start running a daily coach to Brighton. He

said he did not know how I was to get it, but get it I must and it must appear in the next day's issue of the *Daily Mail*. Accordingly, I hired a motor-cab and drove off on the chase. First of all I tried Winston Churchill for an introduction, without success. I then thought that Euren, the manager of the big International Horse Show could put me on the track. I saw him and he at once gave me a card to Vanderbilt. At a quarter to two I ran Vanderbilt to earth at the Berkeley Hotel. He saw me at once and gave me a full story which you have no doubt read in the *Daily Mail*. Vanderbilt is such a nice young man, unassuming and natural. He must be about thirty and looks less. I promised to let him see a proof before dinner. . . . After I had written my story, I took it round to the Berkeley. While he was looking through it he presented me with a wonderful cigar and afterwards made me a special 'Oakland' cocktail, named after his place."

I still retained my connection with *The World* and the Overseas Edition of the *Daily Mail*, but Northcliffe gradually switched me over to the business side, where for six years I worked under Lord Rothermere. But I had various side-shows to look after in my spare time. I hardly knew how to fit all my jobs into the twenty-four hours. Northcliffe left to me the organising of the *Daily Mail* Travel Bureau and the development of the Over-Seas *Daily Mail's* Buying Agency. At the end of 1906, he decided to start a weekly edition of the *Daily Mail* for the Blind, which he entrusted to me. "In addition to the usual round of work and running the World Boot and Stocking Christmas Fund, there has been the successful launching of the Edition for the Blind. Although you would not think it, it has given me a lot of extra work, as getting out any new paper is always a business. The Chief has also left the entire writing-up boom in the *Daily Mail* to me. There is no possibility of making it pay, but the Chief has not done it for that reason, he has always been much interested in the Blind, and also, of course, it all gives us prestige." (*Letter home.*)

"Had one of the busiest days I ever remember," I wrote on the day the paper was launched, "and was living in such a whirl from ten, when I arrived at the office, after my

hour's Italian lesson, until eleven p.m., that I was only able to go out for ten minutes to eat a dozen oysters and have a glass of champagne at Sweetings, in Fleet Street, to revive me. Many blind people came to see me; poor men, I do hope they will enjoy the paper, their dependence on others to read the news must be so awful. I arranged for two skilled Braille readers to peruse advance copies of the paper. It is so curious editing a paper you can't read. It has made me realise the problems of the blind in a way I never did before. . . . In the afternoon was interrupted and summoned by the Chief to go into his room to see the exhibition of thought transference by the Zanzigs, the Danish couple who are on at the Alhambra—they certainly gave a marvellous demonstration. . . . At nine-thirty p.m. the Chief came into the office to see a proof of my account of the starting of the Edition for the Blind for to-morrow's *Daily Mail*. He said, 'You have worked very well, my boy.' " (*Letter home*.)

A few days later as my Christmas present I received from Northcliffe a charming set of six mother-of-pearl and diamond buttons for my white waistcoat. When I came to Carmelite House, friends had shaken their heads and said Northcliffe's favours were of short duration. Such has not been my experience. My stock was still rising, and it continued to rise for another five or six years.

In conjunction with Colonel Crosse of the National Rifle Association I organised an Inter-Colonial Rifle Shoot for Miniature Rifle Clubs. On Northcliffe's instructions I recorded its progress week by week in the *Overseas Daily Mail*. "It will, I hope, ultimately become a very big thing," I wrote home, "we have already thirty-six entries from all over the Empire, and I hope to make it a hundred by Empire Day next year."

The actual contest took place the following Empire Day, and was a great success. Cabled results poured into Carmelite House from all parts of the world. Lord Roberts took a great interest in the scheme. "I fell under 'Bobs' spell. He has absolutely no side and treated me as an equal." (*Letter home*.)

He used to come to see me at my office at Bouverie

Street, the Amalgamated Press headquarters. I felt very proud. He would sit down in my red leather arm chair and we would go over the details together. Lord Roberts' ideas influenced me considerably, and for two or three years my imperialism had a definitely militaristic hue. I did not think that a world-Empire could exist without universal military service.

During my first visit to Canada the lack of British newspapers and magazines was very noticeable. I had given the matter much thought, and, on getting back to London, I noted in my diary, "I very much want to get the Chief and Mr. Harold to let me look after the export side of the business (of the Associated Newspapers and Amalgamated Press). I feel sure that with someone to nurse them, we could increase our sales greatly. In a vast organisation like ours, with the rush of home trade, the export side is liable to be overlooked."

I suggested to Northcliffe that I should be allowed to do a three months' "trial run," to show what I could do on the export side. He agreed. I worked immediately under Mr. B. W. Young, who had been Northcliffe's first employee when he started *Answers* in Paternoster Row, in 1888. For five years I worked in close co-operation with "B.W.", who was always most friendly and helpful. When the probationary period was over, Lord Rothermere sent for me on May 9th, 1907, and definitely appointed me Manager of the Export Dept., a position I retained until I resigned from the Amalgamated Press five years later, so that I might devote myself entirely to the Over-seas League.

For six years I worked under Lord Rothermere, and always found him a just employer and not so impulsive as his elder brother. If you could show results, you received considerate treatment. Lord Rothermere had an uncanny instinct for figures and it was on the business side of the great undertaking, in the building up of which he had played such a large part, that he was primarily interested. When I left the Amalgamated Press in 1912 to go off on my Empire tour, I little thought that I should be again working for Lord Rothermere. When he became Air

Minister in 1917, he appointed me his principal private secretary, a position I retained till he resigned.

From now on I had little spare time to educate myself. I wrote my diary in Russian for the last time. I had to give up all thought of becoming a linguist like my friend, Dr. Emil Reich, who spoke a dozen languages. At that time fashionable London sat at the feet of the learned Hungarian professor and imbibed his views on women, world politics and other subjects. To Dr. Reich in part I owe my interest in history. I used to visit him in his library in St. Luke's Road, Notting Hill, where he sat in his shirt sleeves surrounded by piles of books and pamphlets in twelve languages. He could read every European language except Turkish: even old Icelandic had no terrors for him. The three thousand volumes on his shelves had been very carefully selected and in them, he claimed, he had "the key to several million works on art, history, philosophy, literature and science."

CHAPTER XV

PARIS IN SPRING TIME

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THERE are few more delightful places in the world than Paris in the spring. Hitherto, my acquaintance with the French capital was that of the ordinary tourist. I had "done" the Galleries, visited every building bearing on Napoleon, I had been to Versailles, Malmaison and Fontainebleau; I had seen the night-life of Montmartre, wandered about the *quartier Latin*; I had visited the Morgue the previous year after a morning spent at Poirer's, the fashionable couturier. I was young and I was out to see all aspects of life. So I walked across the bridge from the Hôtel de Ville "to the Morgue as a contrast, where I saw three poor corpses lying on small carts or trucks, they looked very ghastly. To shake off my recollections I dined at the Café Américain and went to see a very Parisian play called 'La Princesse des Flirts' at the 'Parisiana.'" (Diary.)

On May 14th, 1907, I arrived for a two months' stay to act as Managing Director of the *Paris Daily Mail*. I became a work-a-day Parisian, and got to know Paris from the inside. In April I had spent some days in Paris on my return from an Easter tour round Central Europe with George Sutton,* for many years Northcliffe's chief of staff. I then first met Sir Norman Angell,† the General Manager of the *Paris Daily Mail*. When Northcliffe decided to start a Continental Edition, he rightly chose Norman Angell for the job. Angell had had unique experience on Galignani's *Messenger*, the only English daily in Paris.

* Now Sir George Sutton.

† Then Ralph Norman Angel Lane. Lane subsequently changed his name to Norman Angell by deed poll, to which I had the pleasure of acting as witness.

He spoke excellent French, he had lived in America, and understood the British, French and American mentalities. The success of the Paris Edition was in no small measure due to him—for two years Angell had had no holiday. The job of starting the paper had been very strenuous. At last the enterprise was firmly established. Angell could think about holidays.

On an April morning when the trees were bursting into bud, when it was good to be sound of body and in good spirits, with a comfortable bank balance, Sutton and I walked along the Grands Boulevards to the *Daily Mail* office in the rue du Sentier. I was introduced to Angell. He took us to lunch at Café Marguery, where the *patron*, Monsieur Marguery, personally supervised the serving of the famous *Sole Marguery*, for which the restaurant was renowned. We discussed business problems. The following day I dined with Angell and he suggested the possibility of my acting as his deputy on his holiday. A week later he wrote: "I am particularly glad that the proposed plan appeals equally to yourself and the Chief. The Chief quite jumped at it when I mentioned it. I suggested that you might come over to work *with* me for a fortnight, and that then I could go away for a month leaving it to you completely."

On May 15th I took up my new duties, and Angell introduced me to the heads of departments and told them that in his absence I was to be treated just as he was. "I usually lunch with Lane, who is as nice as he could be," I wrote home the following week. "He leaves on Friday for his holiday, and each day he has been putting me more and more in control so that actually his going away will not make much difference. I know you would smile if you could see me surrounded by some of the members of the staff, gesticulating wildly. The staff is very cosmopolitan; French for the most part, twenty to thirty British, two Swiss, a Bohemian, a German, a Swede and an American." A good kindergarten for a citizen of the world.

It was very exciting for a young man of twenty-four, who liked initiative, to find himself in sole command of a daily newspaper with a staff of 250 in a foreign capital, and was a wonderful training in journalism. It was just three

years since my postcard failure, and it was fun once again being the boss of a large staff. The Paris *Daily Mail* was the London *Daily Mail* in miniature. The organisation was sufficiently small to enable me to become familiar with all sides of newspaper production: the machine room, the composing room, the art department, the advertising department, the managerial side, the circulation department, the travel bureau, the telephone room to London, the reporters' room, and, of course, the editorial department.

I thought of my boyhood sensations when I was standing on the bridge of the good ship *Granuaile* and steering her out into the open Atlantic. The only difference now was that no captain stood at my side. Once Angell left I was skipper. I loved my work, and for eight weeks I usually put in ten hours a day at the office. During my stay I only had one day off. Ours was a seven day paper, Sunday or week-day made no difference. My only time off was in the evenings and sometimes on Sunday afternoons. I had my export and London work also to keep going, so I brought my secretary over from Carmelite House and I gave her all my correspondence in English dealing with London matters, and I had a French secretary for Paris and Continental *Daily Mail* letters.

It was amusing—when I had time to enjoy the situation—dictating in French. My excellent secretary, a sedate married woman, would polish up my letters, and when they were brought in the interleaved blotting book for signature, they would have passed the Secretary of the French Academy. She was matronly and *comme il faut*, very different from my idea of the French typist that I had seen portrayed on the stage, who flapped her eyes at her employer.

The work was extraordinarily varied and my mail bag came from every part of Europe. I got the *Reisefieber* (travel fever) again. Hitherto, the names on the letter-headings had been associated in my mind with holiday tours, now they became as much part of the daily round as Glasgow, Leeds, Cardiff and Manchester. Our prosperity was intimately bound up with the tourist

trade and hotel business. The local Syndicat d'Initiative, Kur Verwaltung, or hotel magnate wrote indignantly about some indiscretion on the part of our editorial staff. Perhaps that morning our news columns would have reported a local tornado or hail-storm, the absence of foreigners, continuous bad weather or an outbreak of spotted fever. Paradis-les-Bains was up in arms. Our advertising manager, an extremely efficient Swiss, M. Pfister, would come into my room with a look of dismay on his face. From M. Pfister's standpoint "*Messieurs les clients n'ont jamais tort.*" We must support Paradis-les-Bains, where the sun always shone; why would those unimaginative editorial people always be looking for skeletons in the cupboard? Only last week he had received a 10,000 franc contract from the district. We really must be careful not to circulate any information which would hurt local susceptibilities. That evening there would be interviews and discussions between the editorial and advertising departments. The editor was up in arms. What did the advertising department think the paper was? A rag just to boost our clients? As far as he was concerned, the whole advertising staff might go to — or Paradis-les-Bains! And thus I was initiated into the eternal conflict which takes place in most newspaper offices between the editorial and business sides.

M. Pfister, whose name was pronounced by the French staff as if it were spelt Pfist-a-i-r-r, with great emphasis on the last syllable, was a glutton for work. He knew every hotelier, casino manager and restaurant proprietor in Europe. With many of them he was on Christian name terms. He knew their wives and families. If there was any trouble in Monte Carlo or Madrid, he would run down there and smooth things out.

Another evening there would be rumours of trouble in the machine room, as the French or English Trades Union was threatening to come out on strike. There were hurried conferences with the "father of the Chapel." Or perhaps there would be dissatisfaction among the "readers." I was always very sorry for the whole class of proof-readers. They were usually well-educated men on whom devolved

the thankless task of reading everything, down to the classified advertisements, before it was passed for the press, to detect errors. They spent their lives in a world of roaring printing-presses, glaring arc lamps and a smell of printer's ink. I hope there is a law of compensation in the next world, and that they will pass their days by gurgling streams meandering through buttercup meadows, with larks singing in blue skies above their tired heads, as recompense.

Or perhaps there were more intimate internal problems. Rumours reached me that young Tom Smith was, during office hours, carrying on with Madame Lebrun, and if her husband got to know about it there would be trouble: "You know what these jealous French husbands are." I would have to act the part of the "heavy" employer. I cautioned him that, if he must play the Romeo, he would be well advised to seek his Juliet outside the office staff. No business entanglements, had always been my motto. I became much attached to the French staff. They were so human. They were so much more get-at-able than English people. Madame X would tell me her problems. Her son and heir was making a fool of himself over a woman twice his age. No doubt the sex problem was just as much to the fore in England, but somehow it seemed to be more talked about in France.

As *Directeur-general du Daily Mail*, many doors were open to me, and I soon found that the position of journalist carried more weight than in England. On a Sunday afternoon, when I could escape, I would go to the races at Longchamp or Auteuil with French journalistic colleagues, all of us resplendent in our top hats. I wore a large cardboard ticket labelled "Presse" and much enjoyed the excitement.

The few hours I was able to snatch for Longchamps and Auteuil were a great treat. I had been working so hard that I felt I was entitled to relaxation. The Frenchwoman was a creature apart. *Aux courses* I watched creations designed to suggest hidden charms, which I had seen worn by the mannequins in the perfumed trying-on rooms of the rue de la Paix, now covering the bodies of *les femmes du monde* and *du demi-monde*.

When my term of office drew to a close, I had a few days for amusement. I went shopping in great establishments like *Le Printemps*, *Les Galeries Lafayette* or *La Samaritaine*. New vistas of feminine life were opened up. There were visits to great rooms where I saw more petticoats, of every colour in the rainbow, displayed on revolving stands, than I have ever dreamed of. I amused myself by turning these contraptions round, by going from the twenty franc stand to the thirty franc stand, to the entertainment of my companion and the vivacious saleswoman. I was enchanted by chiffon and satin underwear and nightgowns. The toilette mysteries of the Parisienne were revealed.

And the scent shops. What hidden delights they conjured up; perfumes designed to seduce the defenceless male—"Paris," "June Roses," "Une Nuit d'Été," "Petite Amie." The obliging attendant squirted ambrosia on my silk handkerchief that lasted for hours. Friends from London, in Paris for the week-end, used to invite me to pilot them round. I knew the *dernier cri* in entertainments, restaurants and cabarets, and was proud of my knowledge of Paris from the inside. I hoped my friends returned to London impressed with me in my rôle as a man-about-town. At the end of a long tiring day at the office, a dinner at near-by *Voisins*, or further afield at *Arménonville*, one of the open-air restaurants in the Bois, or at "*Les Ambassadeurs*" in the *Champs Elysées*, was very pleasant.

The ordering of the dinner was a rite. The *maitre d'hôtel* or even the *patron* himself attended with helpful advice. There was *homard*, brought alive in specially constructed tanks from Brittany, whose succulent flesh almost melted in the mouth, or *truite bleu*, poor little things, oblivious of their impending doom, still swimming about in the large tank in the establishment, from which they would be scooped in a small net, glittering and wriggling, by the heartless chef.

Would Monsieur like a *Poulet de Grain*, a *Poulet farci*, or a *Poulet de Duc* with a salad, followed by *Asperges d'Argenteuil* and ending up with a *soufflé surprise* or some morning gathered *fraises du bois à l'orange et maraschino*? Every effort was used to tickle the senses.

Governments might come and Governments might go, rumour might be busy with political crises, there were knotty problems at the office, but the really supreme problem to the personnel, was to incite jaded palates to fresh efforts. Once the dinner was chosen, there was the question of the wine. The sommelier, wearing a chain of office which would have put a provincial Mayor to shame, had strong views. If Bordeaux was selected, Chateau Mouton Rothschild 1872 was evidently indicated. If Monsieur preferred Champagne, then it must be Veuve Clicquot, 1899. Or if one was in a less sophisticated mood and was tired of the Café de la Paix, Paillard, Maire, Durand, Henry, the Ritz and other haunts of fashion, why not spend a hot June evening "Au Vrai Robinson," *propriétaire* Gueusquin Ainé?

Was there a more delightful way of spending the evening after a day of office cares than in the tree tops of the restaurant Robinson on the outskirts of Paris? A wooden staircase led to a little house in the trees. Here the iced melon and *apéritif* ordered in advance was waiting in charge of an obsequious waiter. That *Filet de Sole du Grand Duc* was a creation. *Que de filets de sole on y consomme!* I am sure the Grand Duke never enjoyed it as much as I did. Each course was pulleyed up in a specially constructed basket to our house in the tree tops. The time for coffee and cigars and *Fine Champagne Napoléon* had arrived. It was dark. The lights of Paris twinkled over all of the earth's surface visible from our tree—a dream world. Below, the moths kept circling round the lamps and singeing their wings, but yet they came, till they fell on the ground below, as thick as the petals round a fruit tree after wind.

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Men friends from London used to enjoy a visit to La Tour d'Argent, established, so it was said, in 1582, for Frédéric's creations were famous in five continents. *Le Canard de la Tour d'Argent* was a masterpiece. After deft hands had cut up the tender young duck, the carcass was placed in an electro-plated machine, the *maître d'hôtel* kept turning a silver wheel, and out of the spout of the

machine would trickle a sauce which an epicure would gladly go to the gallows for. Thus was this creation described on the menu by M. le Marquis Lauzières de Thémènes :

*Là, d'un canard, dont reste la carcasse,
Dans une boîte on la broie, on la moud.
Un rude engin l'écrase, la concasse,
Il en résulte un jus exquis au goût.*

Eleven months before I had been living under the open sky of the Canadian West with the pine trees and porcupines for my companions. I was seeing another side of life with a vengeance. There were two or three excursions to Montmartre. L'Abbaye was the magnet which drew the fashionable world. Albert, the presiding patron, was a genius. At a glance he knew how to differentiate the sheep and the goats—only the *monde chic* was permitted downstairs. Tooting and Main Street were politely ushered upstairs without realising that they were not in the holy of holies. If the sunshine of Albert's approval shone on you, you would find yourself at a front table, near the dancing floor, sitting between a Russian Grand Duke and a reigning queen of the demi-monde.

It was a proud moment when Monsieur André de Fouquières, the "Cotillon King" of a dozen *plages*, piloted me through Montmartre. A more entertaining companion would have been hard to find. His top hat in 1907 was the top hat of the cartoonist, it was shaped like a flower pot. Jazz was then unknown, thank heavens! There were wonderful gipsy orchestras and Hungarian and Russian dancers, whose abandon was catching. There were apache dances and cake-walk competitions in which the clientèle was expected to take part. If in specially dashing mood, monsieur le client would send a louis—they were gold in those days—to the chef d'orchestre, it would ensure his favourite valse. The office seemed very far away as one floated round the glistening floor.

A few hours later, at eight o'clock before going to the office, I would be sipping my cup of coffee, as large as a porridge bowl, and eating flaky crescent-shaped rolls that

crumbled in the mouth at the Hotel Meurice. It was difficult not to burn the candle at both ends. I was young, why shouldn't I "enjoy" myself and see as much life as I could? It was perfectly possible to lead one's life in two compartments; the ideal me, who wanted to serve his country and do his job of work well, and the young and human me who must have feminine distraction. What I did was a matter for me alone, it did not concern anyone else—but didn't it? Why should I not chase the blue bird of happiness, that had looked so very blue last night.

And for a week I was plunged again into my work with an occasional visit to the theatre. I had never known what acting was before. There was Sarah Bernhardt in "La Tosca," Réjane in "La Piste," Coquelin and Jane Hading in "L'Attentat" and Mlle Marthe Brandès in "La Pêcheresse." English friends usually preferred an open-air music hall somewhere near the Champs Elysées, where on a balcony with overhanging trees, one could eat a dinner worthy of Lucullus, and as you ate, watch La belle Otéro—then a world celebrity—dancing. Paris was a wonderful place as long as your funds lasted, but it was no place for a poor man. Apart from Monte Carlo, I had never been in a place where money melted so quickly. I understood why it was that rich men became poor here.

On July 1st, my diary records, "I am rather sad that my time in command has terminated." From the standpoint of my career, the visit had been a great success. Northcliffe was very pleased. Angell was kindness itself, and since then dates a treasured friendship. "He is quite anxious for me always to be associated with the paper, and is going to suggest to the Chief that I be made the London director of the paper. He also says he hopes that I will replace him whenever he is away in future." (*Diary*).

Angell wrote to London on July 6th, "I think you would like to know Wrench has done most admirably. I am sure that his six weeks' experience here has given him an insight into the business, which will not only enable him to replace

me when occasion arises, but will enable him to look after the London end of Paris interests, and to serve as a useful link generally between London and Paris. . . . In brief, I am glad to have had him here, and his occasional visits here will, I am sure, help in the linking up of the business.—Ralph Lane.”

In retrospect, the parts of my Paris visit which I looked back on with least pleasure had been my pleasure seeking. First-hand experience had taught me that all is not gold that glisters—frequently only gilt. There were things money could not buy, despite some of my cynical friends—peace of mind, for instance. Ideals were beginning to flicker in the dark chamber of my soul.

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In February, 1908, I took leave of Mademoiselle Coussement, her father and my fellow lodgers at 139, Warwick Street, and a chapter in my life closed. I had been over two years under her roof and had learnt to talk French tolerably. My first cousin, Hylda des Voeux and her husband asked me to come and stay with them. I eagerly seized the opportunity of having real home life. Ever since my boyhood I had had a deep affection for my cousin, who was also my sister's greatest friend. Her mother, Francis Yeats-Brown's mother and my mother were sisters. Her father* had been my favourite uncle and for many years my father was his agent when we lived in Co. Fermanagh. I arranged to stay with my cousin and her husband for six months. I actually remained for four years.

In my cousin's house I found myself in an entirely new world—a world with which I had hitherto been unfamiliar since I came to live in London. Providence evidently thought it was about time that I got instruction in right values in life. I had definitely lived down my early post-card failure. I had been nearly four years with Northcliffe. My stock was rising rapidly. I was prosperous, and my income was steadily increasing. I was still hypnotised by worldly success. Power was the goal, as much power as


* Sir Victor Brooke, of Colebrooke, Co. Fermanagh.

possible ; to exercise power you must have money. When you had money you could buy happiness and other things.

In my cousin I found someone who had entirely different standards. Riches and ambition as a goal were beyond her comprehension. A burning Faith was the mainspring of her life, she lived for others. She was a devoted mother. Her only daughter, Pamela, to-day one of my greatest friends, was just under a year old. To be with my cousin was an education in itself. She awoke my interest in poetry and botany. She lived in a world of books. There was hardly a biography about saint or mystic, literary celebrity or poet that she had not read. My cousin talked about George Herbert, Fenélon, Brother Lawrence, St. Augustine, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Francis, George Fox, the Brownings, the Brontës, the Shelleys, Keats, George Eliot, the Tennysons, the Carlyles, as if they were friends. I have never met anyone who could so make dead people live. She wandered about the paths of French history with sure steps.

Hitherto I had regarded achievement in the world of affairs as the hall mark of success. I now learnt that there were other standards. I became interested in Carlyle and his eccentricities and his burning desire for a better world ; in the wonderful love story of the Brownings, in the tragic story of the Brontë sisters and above all in the writings of Evelyn Underhill.

As the years passed the spell that Carmelite House had cast over me began to weaken. In seven years the physical body is said to change entirely. In four years my spiritual and mental outlook changed no less completely. Externally I might look the same, but I was another individual. In the early stages I did not know that I was changing.



CHAPTER XVI

A "CLOSE-UP" OF NORTHCLIFFE

THE year 1908 was a year of travel and illness. I spent more than seven months out of England. Life was very thrilling. When you have been a failure and have had a severe knock to your pride, you become sensitive. At first you mistrust success; you wonder whether the pendulum of fortune will again swing away from you. I had now been nearly four years with Northcliffe—a period longer than that of the postcards. With each subsequent half-year, increasing responsibilities were put on my shoulders and my income increased correspondingly. My pride was soothed. My diary opens in 1908 on a note of optimism and of concentrated purpose. "So busy that I had not time to go out for lunch. One day is more interesting than another—indeed the days are much too short to get thro' all I want to. . . . Altogether things look very hopeful."

In the next two years I saw more of Northcliffe than ever. I was constantly with him, in Paris, in the Pyrenees, in Spain, Canada and the United States. Early in January in Paris I went to a cinema for the first time—in his company. These moving pictures were certainly very wonderful, but I wished they would not flicker so. New inventions made a great appeal to Northcliffe. He was also much engrossed in the prospects of flying. I went for daily walks with him. It was very invigorating walking along the Champs Elysées in the weak January sunshine.

I now missed the greatest financial opportunity of my life. Northcliffe offered me 10,000 Deferred Shares in the Associated Newspapers at par. Unfortunately, neither my father nor I could find the money. If I had been able to avail myself of that offer, I would have had a large income for life. Those shares to-day are worth twenty times their purchase price. Probably it was much better for me not to be a rich man.

Past experience ought to have taught me not to over-work. But my career was my absorbing interest. My diary records: "This is the thirtieth day running that I have been at the office without a break." On Saturdays and Sundays I was able to catch up. My work was very varied. Supervision of the Overseas *Daily Mail*, writing the weekly survey of the week's news for that paper, organising the Inter-Colonial Empire Day Rifle Contest, organising the *Daily Mail* Travel Bureau, the London management of the Paris *Daily Mail*, and finally the development of the Amalgamated Press Export Sales.

I could not shake off a persistent cough. Northcliffe thought I was looking tired. He said I must "get away to the sunshine for a month." From Sutton Place I wrote home: "My various shows are going strong. The Chief is very pleased. Altogether the sun is shining rather brightly at the moment. I feel I have earned my holiday. . . . This morning I had two quiet hours with the Chief going through the different things I am connected with, which was very satisfactory."

My father and I spent a delightful holiday. We went by steamer from Marseilles to Naples, thence to Sicily. From Palermo we went by boat to Tunis. My father was just like a boy on his holidays, and the heart complaint from which he suffered for many years had not yet developed. Our journey is a very happy memory. Robert Hitchens' *The Garden of Allah* was a more human handbook to Tunis than Baedeker. I was longing to get to Biskra. It fully came up to my expectations. We naturally put up at the Royal Hotel, where Domini* stayed. We climbed up to the tower and watched the sun setting over the oasis and the Sahara beyond. The first night spent by the desert is a milestone not to be forgotten. The clean fresh air blown across thousands of miles of space, a moonlit night, far off sounds from the oasis. I longed to escape from civilisation. It seemed absurd to be in Biskra and

* The heroine in *The Garden of Allah*, by Robert Hitchens.

have no adventures. I went round with a fellow tourist to the street of the Ouled Nails and watched coffee-coloured women, adorned with gold coins, ornaments and bangles, do the *danse du ventre*. But their charms left me cold. The desert air and the stars outside acted as an invisible armour against the frailties of the flesh.

The "Garden of Allah" was smaller than I had expected. Outside—the cruel glare of a relentless sun, dusty roads, smells, noise; inside, a world enclosed, a forest of swaying date palms, flaming creepers, hibiscus and bougainvillea and paths of white sand. I spent a morning in a secluded corner. The plaintive notes of a flute were wafted to me from the gardener's hut. Could it be "Larbi"*? Yes, it was. Larbi was delighted to display his talents . . .

I felt the call of the desert. An excursion to a neighbouring oasis whetted my appetite. To be a natural man and escape away to a world in which there were no newspapers. I rode a white arab, and never enjoyed any ride so much. "It was gorgeous when one was right away from everyone and when one could not see a single human being—just rolling sand dunes as far as the horizon . . . You see what appear to be huge lakes or arms of the sea or a lake with a wooded island—directly evening comes all the mirage disappears and you see nothing but the illimitable desert." (*Diary*.)

After three hours we reached the oasis, stated to contain the oldest mosque in Islam, built a few years after the death of the Prophet. The sun beat down on us. We tried to keep in the narrow strip of shade in the streets. It was mid-day. The Muezzin was calling the Faithful to prayer from the minaret: "There is no God but God, Mahomet is the prophet of God."†

We could not stand the heat and escaped into a white-walled courtyard. Here the local youth were droning their lessons in monotonous sing-song voices . . .

We drank coffee with Arab friends, while we were sitting there some Nomad Bedouins came in on very fine camels from the far interior . . . We walked to one of

* The flute player in Hichens' *The Garden of Allah*.

† "La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad rasul Allah."

the seven gates to the desert. "A huge funeral 'service' was taking place. An Arab had been found murdered eighty miles away in the desert and a camel caravan had brought in his body. A group of seventy women walked round in a moving circle, moaning, crying and tearing their faces with their long nails till the blood came. Long rows of praying men were squatting on the ground with their faces towards Mecca. Around the corpse was a small group washing the body and performing final rites. Nearby stood caravans of patient camels waiting." (*Letter to my mother.*)

On the way home we passed through clouds of locusts. They seemed unending. "The natives catch them and boil them in hot salt water and then dry them. You see heaps of dried locusts in every market place and the people take them in handfuls and keep on munching them. We could not quite face sampling them . . . There was a lovely sunset as we returned to Biskra. The palm trees stood out against the red glow. If only I could recapture that vision of beauty when I get back to London." (*Diary.*)

Back to "civilisation." In Paris I was taken by friends to the Casino de Paris. "The Revue really was the limit. It is the first time I have seen naked women on the stage." (*Diary.*)

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When I was growing up I had often thought that my destiny would be to go into Parliament. When the opportunity came I was so absorbed in my career in Fleet Street that I only gave the matter a passing thought. My father brought me an invitation to fight an important industrial constituency where the local committee of the Conservative Party was on the look-out for a young Irishman with the "right views." I answered that at present I was unable to think of anything outside my business. I told Northcliffe by letter of the event and received a characteristically short reply. Northcliffe in later life never had much respect for Parliament. He thought the real power in the realm lay in Fleet Street.

22, ST. JAMES'S PLACE.

"MY DEAR EVELYN,

"I am very glad to see that you were not so stupid as to think of wasting your time in Parliament. You are much too young for it and have your living to earn."

"CHIEF."

I had only been back in England a fortnight when Alfred Butes, then Northcliffe's chief private secretary, informed me that the chief wanted me to go down to Spain with him and Lady Northcliffe. The prospect of spending three weeks at such close quarters with him was alluring, and besides it would be great fun to run a Spanish household. I was to be put in charge of the housekeeping and domestic staff and was also to do all Northcliffe's secretarial work.

Back in the land of Mañana, I wrote in my diary: "It is nice being back again in this brown land of sunshine, prickly pears and peasants riding donkeys." I went on ahead of the Chief and Lady Northcliffe to have everything ready for their arrival. On the journey to Seville, "I was roused out of my sleep by the train suddenly stopping, and one of the passengers rushed in and gesticulated in an excited way, and kept repeating, 'Toro.' I gathered that we had run over a bull. Knowing Spanish ways I decided to dress in peace as I was sure that I would have plenty of time to see the 'show' when I was ready. The excitement had cleared my sleeper of its three other occupants, so I was able to dress in comfort. Sure enough we had run over an enormous bull, which was too much for the engine! In protest it had gone off the rails. The bull—or what remained of him—was rolled up in a lump like a huge black snowball. All that was recognisable was his head and horns." (*Diary*.)

Northcliffe had taken for the Seville Fair, from Mr. Arthur Keyser, the British Consul, a charming Spanish house with a large marble patio, "open to the sky, and with a garden of roses in full bloom clustering up the walls." My bedroom opened out of the patio on the ground floor, and on the opposite side of the court was my office. "The household consists of Rafael, an

extremely good-looking boy of twenty," I wrote home, "who runs the whole show, a real 'Admirable Crichton.' He keeps the household accounts and waits so nicely at table in a brown holland uniform with brass buttons stamped with the British Royal Arms. Rafael is a treasure and one applies to him in all troubles. The cook, Mary, an old American woman, who comes from the Southern States, has lived in Spain for forty years. She wears a red bandana round her head and has the manners of a Grande Dame and is devoted to her cat. There must be some mystery about her—Mary, not the cat. How does she, a white American-born woman, come to enter domestic service in Europe, in view of the dislike of the American-born for domestic service? I try to get her to talk about America but she always turns the conversation. She is a splendid cook. Some of her dishes are worthy of Escoffier.

"Then there is Trinidad, the housemaid; such a nice person; two other women, whose names I don't know, one odd man and finally the washerwoman, who lives on the roof, which she shares with Rafael's hens, that unfailingly provide us with our eggs for breakfast. The whole thing is too fascinating for words. I do all the housekeeping and the entire establishment comes to me for instructions. The only one who speaks English is Mary, but a mixture of English, Italian, a few words of Spanish and gestures seem to answer. The Chief has hired a carriage for the three weeks for £80. It is a very smart affair with a coachman and footman with yellow cockades. When one gets in and out, the footman stands with his hat in his hand, so you can imagine I try to live up to the part."

The party, in addition to the Northcliffes, consisted of Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Garvin, Owen Seaman and Charles Whibley; all of them old friends. Our meals were very entertaining. With two such conversationalists as Garvin and Whibley there was no fear of boredom. I was greatly impressed with "Garve's" profound learning and retentive memory. He talked with equal erudition on Velasquez or modern Spanish politics. Since then dates a valued friend-

ship. Subsequently Northcliffe and Garvin parted company but the Chief always had a great admiration for him. He thought that Garvin was the greatest journalist in England but he sometimes disagreed with Garvin's views.

My life in Seville was a busy one. Some days I never emerged from the four walls of our house. There was all Northcliffe's correspondence to deal with, cables to decipher and send in connection with the *Times* negotiations, a daily news summary, wired to us from Paris, to type out, and then the running of the household. When our house party dispersed I had several days alone with the Northcliffes before we returned to England. I much enjoyed the special opportunities of long walks and talks with the Chief. He seemed more care-free than I ever remember him.

He opened his heart to me, discussed his plans for the future, his difficulty in finding "generals" for his undertaking, and he repeatedly told me that he hoped I would become one of the two or three key men in the business. One day we went for a two hours' walk near some Moorish ruins at Alcalar, ten miles from Seville. We discussed the future of the Empire and I told Northcliffe of my scheme for starting the Overseas League, a great non-party society to promote the unity of the British Commonwealth. He was much interested and promised me the free use of the columns of the Overseas *Daily Mail* for furthering the scheme.

My stock remained high for another couple of years, but I think the high-water mark of my friendship with Northcliffe was reached at this time. Northcliffe told me that he would lend me a thousand pounds to purchase a thousand deferred shares in the Associated Newspapers. This promise was carried out on my return to London. I was to pay back the capital by degrees. I sold these shares after the War for three thousand pounds; if I had kept them they would have been worth several times that amount. He told me he wanted me to run the weekly edition of *The Times* for him—a suggestion which never materialised because I was too busy.

The two chief "attractions" of a stay at Seville during the Easter holidays were the religious ceremonies and the famous bull-fights. The Cathedral services and processions did not appeal to me. I disliked the atmosphere of theatricality. The city was *en fête*, the hotels were doing a roaring business. Religion was being used to fill the pockets of the citizens. Nevertheless, I am quite sure that thousands of devout worshippers drew inspiration from the Holy Week services. For my part I thought that Oberammergau was everything that Seville was not.

In a journal letter to my parents I wrote, "We have been seeing religious processions galore. They do not impress me nearly as much as I had expected. For the most part the populace treats the occasion as a good opportunity for an outing. One sees little religious fervour—at least so it seems to me. None of the ceremonies, not even High Mass in the Cathedral to-day (Easter Sunday) impressed me a quarter as much as Mahommedans at prayer.

"The most interesting procession was at 2 a.m. during the night between Good Friday and Easter Saturday. The whole square of San Lorenzo was in darkness, suddenly the doors of the Church were thrown open and thousands of lighted candles became visible. A procession of five hundred black, purple or white figures emerged carrying candles. The figures were enveloped in cloaks from head to foot. Over their heads they wore peaked hoods like sugar loafs. There were two slits for the eyes. The dress dates from the Inquisition."

I saw the great bull-fight on Easter Sunday. I am glad to see from my diary that I refused to go a second time. "We went to the great bull-fight of the year in the Plaza de Toros. It was interesting to see once but I have no desire to see another. As the procession winds its way round the arena at the outset, there is a feeling of coming drama. When the matadors play with the bull there are exciting moments. Their skill and agility is wonderful. But the part of the show when the horses are in the Ring is too horrible for words and made my blood boil. I can't understand why the Church permits it. Surely it is strong enough in Spain to make a protest.

"Six bulls are killed in each bull-fight. They come in at intervals of twenty minutes. Several times the bull looked bewildered when he emerged from his darkened stall into the yellow glare of the Arena. Poor brute, he tried to go back into the stable, but the doors were shut. The men's dexterity was very wonderful, but six or eight men *versus* one bull was not my idea of sport. Our box was right up at the top. The de Bunsens* were next to us. I was glad we were so far from the arena so that we could not see all the horrible details. After the first horse was killed I kept my eyes shut whenever the picador part of the show was taking place." (*Diary*.)

We were sad to say good-bye to Rafael, Mary, Trinidad and the others, but all nice things must end. The Chief, Lady Northcliffe and I returned to Madrid by way of Cordova. "The Chief and I had cold asparagus and prawns for lunch in the train." (*Diary*.) And now back to work.

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I have never read an account of Northcliffe which makes him really live again for me. I wish I could write one. How catch that indefinable thing, personal magnetism? An outward picture, yes; his clear-cut features, the Napoleonic lock hanging over his forehead, the square tipped fingers, the capable podgy hands, the thick, rather gross neck, the small feet, the eyes that could be kind or cruel according to mood; of his clothes, yes: the dark blue suits made by Poole, the soft collars and red silk tie with white spots. I wish I had asked him why he always wore that ugly combination of colours—the trousers not braced up enough, the Homburg hat pulled down over his eyes, the inevitable German cigar, supplied by Appenrodt in Coventry Street, costing fourpence, always smoked with the band on. In hot weather he would wear no waistcoat, and put his gold watch in his ticket pocket, the chain hanging down into the large side pocket below—the little note-book in which he entered notes with a very soft pencil in that large scrawly writing.

* Sir Maurice de Bunsen, British Ambassador at Madrid.

These things I remember, but how portray the Chief, as he appeared to a devoted young man for six years, before there had been any rift in our friendship? His bantering manner to his favourites, his chaffing, his "humanness," the way in which he entered into your problems and his ability to make you feel that he was as much interested in your work as you were yourself?

Northcliffe undoubtedly had a flair for coming events. In 1908 he was already talking about the Anglo-German struggle as a certainty. He was convinced that Germany sooner or later would challenge British supremacy on the seas. I used to argue with him, but he never changed his point of view. The conversation would end like this: "My dear Evelyn, I have German relatives, I know them, they will bide their time, but *der Tag* will come. Remember what I say. The Kaiser has several times tried to get into personal touch with me, but I prefer to keep away from him."

I always regret that I did not discuss things of the spirit with the Chief. When our friendship was closest, I was entirely absorbed by the material world. As far as I can recollect in the hundreds of hours I must have spent in his company we never discussed the soul. I think he just left that side of life aside and his spiritual nature became atrophied. Charles Darwin had no time for poetry; Northcliffe, the man of action, had no time for religion. On one occasion I went with him to a Memorial Service for some Fleet Street celebrity. The officiating clergyman delivered a somewhat dull sermon, extolling the virtues of the deceased. The Chief leant over to me and whispered, "What a profession, no wonder only people with no initiative go into it." On the other hand there was one cleric for whom he had an unbounded admiration, Father Dolling, whose work for slum children he and Lady Northcliffe supported generously.

After the War, when I was once staying with him at Elmwood, his favourite place, near Broadstairs in Kent, I found him sitting after dinner by himself looking at the stars. I thought it would be tactless to break in on his reverie, so I walked up and down on the lawn by myself.

I would have given a great deal to know his thoughts then. That was one of the last occasions when I stayed with him alone and he gave me the impression of a dissatisfied and seeking soul. But in pre-War days he was much too busy "running the world" to bother about the world unseen.

Northcliffe had a very strong will, when he liked to exercise it. Till he was thirty-four he was subject to one very bad habit, more suitable to the school-room. He bit his nails till they bled. When January 1st, 1900, arrived he made up his mind that he would never bite his nails again, and he kept his vow. At Monte Carlo I was struck by the fact that although he would go into the "Rooms," he never gambled. I think he told me that he feared high play might get hold of him, so he decided to cut it out of his life.

What a tragedy it was that that wonderful will power was not always consecrated to worthy objects. He tried to live his life in compartments and he did not recognise that man is a whole, that unworthy acts can not be performed at certain hours of the day and forgotten, that they undermine the whole character. If I had to explain why it was that Northcliffe did not leave a more lasting impress on his generation, I would say that it was lack of character.

The first time that I ever saw the ugly side of his nature was in 1908. I had unintentionally learnt about something which he wished to keep private. Naturally I would never have said a word to a soul. He was very disturbed about the whole thing, not with me, for I had nothing to say to it, but he vented his spleen on me. He came into my room and said, "If you ever tell a soul, I will sack you on the spot." I could hardly believe my ears, that the Chief should speak to me like that. The next time I saw him, he went out of his way to be nice to me. I thought no more about the matter, except that I could not understand how a ruler of men could employ such wrong tactics with one of his most devoted employees.

Three of the nicest things about the Chief were his love for his mother, his love of children and his love of youth. He liked having young men around him. He had carved out a career for himself when he was a young man, he

believed in giving youth a chance. Any young man with ideas was certain to receive a sympathetic hearing. There was, of course, an element of instability ; if the young man began to count on his position with the Chief, he might get a rude shock. The sun was no longer shining on him. Northcliffe certainly liked variety. In my case, if our relations subsequently became less cordial, the fault was largely mine. I was no longer ready to give him that devotion to which he was accustomed. My values changed and he no longer remained the hero he had been for the first five or six years. There was a cruel side to Northcliffe's character. If he had his knife in anyone he was ruthless and relentless. In 1909 I began to see that my idol had feet of clay. I like to think that this ugly side to his nature was due to his coming mental instability which resulted in his premature death.

Northcliffe possessed the power of concentration more than anyone I have ever met. Therein lay the key to his success. I remember his often saying, "Without concentration you can achieve nothing big in life." When he was starting a newspaper and undertaking some special piece of work, he would think of nothing else. He became absorbed in that one project, nothing else existed. He carried his concentration into small things as well. In 1909 he brought back to England twenty-four American "robins"—rather like blackbirds—and eight grey squirrels from Central Park, New York. He let them out at Sutton Place and the one subject of interest was whether we had seen the blackbirds on our walks.

There was some strand in his character that demanded new undertakings, new faces around him. If this aspect in his nature is understood, it clears up much that might otherwise be incomprehensible.

CHAPTER XVII

TYPHOID AT TORONTO—AND THE SPANISH MAIN

MY connection with the *Continental Daily Mail* continued for several years. In 1908 Northcliffe gave me a percentage of the net profits. I used to make constant visits to Paris, or sometimes Angell and I would meet at some convenient halfway place, such as Dieppe or Boulogne. When we had dealt with business we would discuss politics, international relations, the Empire, education, marriage. The more I saw of Angell, the more I grew to respect his views. The logical quality of his mind impressed me greatly. We had many talks on the Empire. I told him of my desire to start a great Imperial non-party brotherhood. There was divergence in our views, however. Angell regarded world unity as the ultimate goal, at that stage in my career I was not prepared to go beyond the unity of the British Commonwealth. The rest of humanity would have to look after itself. My task was to try to unite the peoples living under the British flag.

On one occasion we were staying at the Hotel Christol and Bristol at Boulogne. Angell started talking about the futility of war. In the modern world, in which the European financial centres were so interlocked, it was no longer possible to make money by a successful war. In the old days you waged war on your neighbour, you raided his territory and escaped with the booty, not so in the twentieth century. Such was our inter-dependence that the victor in a successful war would no longer derive financial advantage from his victory. Strange doctrines these. I recognised that my outlook on many problems of world policy would have to be revised. Within a year Angell incorporated these doctrines in *The Great Illusion* of which a million copies were sold and which took Europe by storm. Few books have so radically affected the outlook of a generation.

The Amalgamated Press's export business was forging ahead in Canada. A personal visit was necessary. I sailed from Liverpool on the *Lusitania* in July with several business friends. I had never travelled in such luxury. In view of my Press connections the Cunard Company gave me a *de luxe* suite. "No words can describe the wonders of the *Lusitania*," I wrote home, "she is the last thing in ship construction. She is as much ahead of any vessel I have ever seen as the Chief's 60 h.p. Mercedes is ahead of my former Panhard. My suite is upholstered in silk, the walls are satin-wood, I have a thick Axminster carpet, a brass bedstead, three armchairs, a writing-table, a card table, two large *windows* and two portholes."

Subsequently I regretted all this luxury. When the smoking-room on the main deck was closed at eleven-fifteen p.m. my friends used to troop down to my comfortable room. Whiskies and sodas and beer would be ordered and they would settle down for three or four hours' "peaceful" poker, or *vingt-et-un*. I learnt more about poker on that voyage than in all the rest of my life. By the time I arrived at New York, I was a sadder and wiser man. My average sleep cannot have been more than five hours. I lost as much as the cost of my fare to New York. Since that date I have never touched a card, so the experience was salutary.

"The chief thing that strikes me on this visit is the un-English appearance of most of the people—the enormous immigration of late years of Russians, Poles, Italians, Hungarians is having effect. In Broadway it is rare to find a purely English name. Utility before everything seems to be the motto. There is ceaseless rush. On the other hand there is a splendid feeling of 'endeavour' in the air which appeals to me greatly and I can quite imagine being caught in its vortex . . .

"On the whole the New York Press is provincial and one hardly notices any European cables at all.* The brisk manners—one might say rudeness—of the people, strikes one very much after the politeness at home. I had almost

* Ten years later a great change had taken place and the New York Press as a whole gave a better service of foreign news than most English papers.

forgotten how resentful the man-in-the-street is if one asks him for information. The Subway, which I make great use of, is certainly unequalled. The express electric trains do quite fifty miles an hour . . .

"The taxicabs at New York are few and far between and are ruinous. They cost a dollar before you know where you are and one drive cost me eleven dollars (£2 4s. od.) during the afternoon." (*Diary*.)

When I got to Canada I went to Ottawa to renew my friendship with Lord Grey. One of his A.D.C.'s was Lord Lascelles,* who had been at Eton with me. "Lord Grey and I had a long talk about the relations of Canada and the West Indies and the desirability of drawing all the sections of the Empire in North and Central America together—Canada, British West Indies, British Honduras and British Guiana. At his suggestion I went to see Sir Richard Cartwright, Minister of Trade and Commerce. We discussed the need for faster steamers between Canada and the old country."

An American heat-wave is unpleasant when in the best of health, but if you feel out of sorts it is a nightmare. "I have done three real good days' work despite the heat, and think that considerable good will come from this trip. The heat has been terrible—the temperature has only been 90—92° in the shade—but the dampness in the air has been so trying. One perspires all day long and one feels just like a used up rag. The last two nights I have been going to bed early so as to keep myself in good trim. The kindness of everyone is tremendous. I have not had a meal alone since I landed!"

I had often experienced heat before, but I had never felt like this. I was working hard, having business interviews from morning to night. I was very limp. Each morning shaving and dressing was more of an effort. Symptoms of my malaria returned. I lost my appetite. For several days I dragged a weary body around with me. Good business prospects found me indifferent. Even talks about the British Empire seemed to have lost their power to stir my enthusiasm. One night at the railway

* Now Lord Harewood.

station waiting for trains, I lay full length in the waiting-room shivering. I was hot and cold alternately. My head throbbed, I wanted nothing but to be left alone, to lie still.

Things could not go on like this. On August 20th I just managed to shave by resting for long intervals. My teeth were chattering. Our Canadian Manager came to fetch me for a round of calls. He saw I was very ill. He took me round to see Dr. R. P. Noble . . . "Temperature over 104—Typhoid." Half dead, I was taken round to Grace Hospital where I spent the next thirty days. Every thing was more or less of a blur. I was helped to a seat in the matron's office by the entrance. "What is your name, your Canadian address, name of nearest relatives—their address, Ireland—oh, have you no relatives in Canada? No." Our manager answered these tiresome questions, the world was swaying round me. Oh, why couldn't I be left in peace? I wanted to lie down—if I were going to die, I didn't care . . .

Thank heavens I was in bed—how refreshing those ice packs on my head were. I was cool at last. Who was that nice little woman in pale blue with a white head-dress? What cool efficient hands. What was that voice crying in the passage—oh, it wasn't in the passage—it was the man next door. Oh, what did he want, why did he go on calling M-A-Y-R-E-E (Mary), MAYREE, why wouldn't he stop? Who was Mary? He was very ill, poor fellow, only I wished he wouldn't shout so loud. Those clanging street cars outside, what a noise they made. "Oh, Nurse, I am dripping. Can my pyjamas be changed? Nurse, how long have I been here?" "Three days." "Have I really? Why has the man stopped shouting for Mary?" "Hush, you must keep quiet. If you do what you are told you will soon get better." "Shall I?" "Here are some nice messages for you. Shall I read them?" "Please Nurse." Cables from my family, cables from Northcliffe.

A week later: the Doctor was satisfied—I was out of danger. So the poor man next door had died. I knew he had. "Why wouldn't you tell me? Oh, I know he's

dead, it's no use your pretending. Poor fellow, what was the matter with him—typhoid like me? I wish I knew his story." "He had been in a lumber camp, he arrived too late to be saved." Mary must have been the woman he cared for—I wondered how she heard about his death. How lucky for me I was out of danger. I had had a near shave.

What a mysterious thing death is, though really when it is so near, you are too tired to worry. Say my turn had come, was I ready to move on? No, I certainly wasn't. What had I got to show for my life, where had all my hustling got me? What was the use of all I had been doing? Was the world any better for my existence? How was it that one could become so absorbed in the ephemeral? We all lived as if there were no such thing as death, as if we were here in this old planet for good. Yes, but if you weren't keen on your work, you would get nowhere. All men who did things had to concentrate on their careers.

During the next sixty days I would get plenty of time for thinking about my future. Of course I must think first about my career; all the same when I returned to ordinary life I should like to think that I had helped in the scheme of things—even a tiny bit. What microbes we humans were. Each one of us, a little ant, and if we dropped out, the world went on just the same. But that was fatalism, a dangerous doctrine. Anyhow wasn't it the Chief who once said to me that health was the only thing that really mattered? But was it? What was the use of being alive and well if you didn't do something with your life? Immortal man to become a healthy cabbage. There must be some meaning in life. Was some pattern being woven perhaps in my life, without my knowledge? Was I too close to myself to see my life as a whole? Perhaps life was like a piece of tapestry. On the wrong side you saw only untidy ends but the pattern was there nevertheless. Was that so with my life?

Cables informed me that my sister was coming out to look after me. With eager anticipation I looked forward to her coming. Northcliffe sent me daily cables.

"Spare no expense dearest Evelyn."

"Our fond love dear E."

"Remember we shall be with you in a few weeks."

"Everyone delighted with Dr. Noble's cables."

"Just starting shave beard Chief."

Northcliffe got a daily cable from my doctor, which he sent to my father and mother. No parent could have done more for his son than he did for me. By the time I was getting better the European mail brought a bundle of letters and postcards from him. He wrote a daily postcard and two fat letters a week, in his own handwriting. He made jokes that he knew would amuse me. He sent me a postcard from the Ritz Hotel, Paris, with these words: "We find this hotel most excellent and moderate!"

This letter from Northcliffe, in his own handwriting, in pencil, covered twelve single sheets of writing paper:

HÔTEL RITZ,
PLACE VENDÔME,
PARIS.

15.9.1908.

"DEAREST EVELYN,

"Your cheery letter suggests that you are now able to receive correspondence, and perhaps even strong enough to read my writing.

"First. Do exactly what Dr. Noble says about yr. convalescence. If he says mountain or sea air take it. Or we shall be delighted to have you at the St. Regis, New York, high up, and look after you and you can go about with us, if fit enough. If you are not fit enough we will come to Toronto to see you. I show all Dr. Noble's cables to doctors so know exactly how you are. We ought to arrive, via *Lusitania*, 8th or 9th and have no plans except that I desire to study paper making at some New England or Canadian mill and to see all the Newfoundland people.

"I have been twice in Paris since you left. Things are all right. Loss heavy at first,* as was expected. Will be better next month and so on for some months. I am sending you the paper for 3 weeks. It might amuse you and you needn't read it unless you care.

"We have been in Germany for a fortnight on the eye business. Very satisfactory.

* Reports, *Paris Daily Mail*.

"I forget whether you saw my new 135 h.p. toy. It's 'quite an automobeel' as our Yankee friends have it.

"I will go into all your affairs before I leave London and report to you thereon. There *may* (it's a secret) be pending a refloatation of the Amalgamated Press to make the £1 Ordinary shares more liquid. I will see that you are well looked after if I agree to do it. I am enclosing a cheque for £100 on $\frac{1}{6}$ of expenses. You can get it cashed, in time. I will settle up rest on arrival, or send more if you cable for it.

"It is a hot September day. Paris is grilling and Lane looked wan and pale in his little black hole of Calcutta.* Pfister, McAlpine, Donald and all the teeny weenies asked if you were doing well and I replied that they might expect you on a visit of inspection any time.

"This is not so much a letter as a caligraphic puzzle. It will be a change from lying on your back and watching the flies' Euclid-like movements, or flirting with your nurses.

"Dr. Noble sounds a hearty (now what is that word?) one from his cables. Being ill far from home is hateful. I remember my malarial fever at St. Augustine (Florida). I thought I never *should* get back.

"We go home Sunday 21st then a terrific bout of work with the annual little partridge shooting party and then for a real holiday. I suppose I need it. I don't seem to, but perhaps it will improve the quality of my work.

"I wonder how you caught typhoid.

"Now cable what you need us to bring. I hope Miss Wrench will stay as long as she chooses. I have asked yr. father to see me before we go.

"Adieu,

"Your devoted,

"CHIEF."

"This is the longest letter I ever wrote† begun 15th finished 9 a.m. 18th Sept. 1908."

Lady Northcliffe wrote long kind letters, containing just the kind of information which would amuse me. From the Ritz Hotel, Paris, in September she wrote: "The little note in your own handwriting and your sister's letter were very welcome here. Your Chief has been very anxious about you, for you must know you are one of the brightest stars in his firmament of young men—and very near to his heart, quite apart from your work. We are both delighted to know that you are well on the road to recovery.

* The Managing Director's Office at the Paris Daily Mail.

†Lord Northcliffe meant in his own handwriting.

We have talked of you much and waited with anxiety for the cables.

"You will be glad with me that the report of the Chief's eyes is *wonderfully* good. The new toy is a Mercedes of 135 h.p.—flying machines not yet being quite practical—this serves as a stop-gap!"

My sister arrived twelve days after I had fallen ill. It was a very happy moment and for the next two months she was my constant companion. I was moved a month later by ambulance to the Hillcrest Convalescent Home in Toronto. I was now convalescing and I began to keep my diary again. On October 8th there is an entry: "Fiftieth day of my illness. Had the barber up to shave off my beard in the afternoon. Quite a congregation assembled to watch the ceremony." When I look back at the snapshots taken before this important event I am depressed. To think that a few weeks without shaving can turn you into such a ruffian. I looked just like one of the second-hand clothes dealers in the Ghetto of Warsaw—my hair was very black. Apparently everyone did not think that the removal of the beard was an improvement, because my little friend Phyllis Strathey, aged seven, wept when she saw that "strange pale-faced man." It was a few days before she became quite reconciled to the change.

The doctor said that I must have a complete change and sea air. Northcliffe paid for a cruise to the West Indies for my sister and myself. We stayed at Ottawa with Lord Grey on our way to New York. I sat next to Lord Milner at breakfast the first morning. My comment was: "He is essentially a big man, though possibly inclined to be obstinate. He has a sad expression, though a very nice smile. He has a fine forehead. He represents my ideal of a British statesman. Had great talks with him about the future of Canada and the Empire. Also of course with Lord Grey and my old friend Moreton Frewin who is here."

We stayed several days with Lord and Lady Northcliffe at the St. Regis Hotel, New York. New York was in the throes of a Presidential election, it was early in November. I had my first experience of a cold "snap" in North

America. "A wind swept along the gullies of the New York streets, with their towering skyscrapers on each side, that literally cut through one. Watched the vast Republican procession wending its way along Fifth Avenue. A hundred thousand citizens took part. I shall never forget that waving sea of 'Stars and Stripes.' Took an express elevator to the top of the Singer Building (forty-two storeys), one of the highest in New York. There is an unequalled view of the harbour, and the crowds in the streets looked like ants belonging to another world." . . . "Dined with the Chief and Lady N. before sailing for Jamaica on the Royal Mail steamer *Tagus*." (*Diary*.)

Forty hours after leaving wintry New York we were basking in the sunshine of the tropics. Armed with a plentiful library, from Prescott's *Conquest of Peru* to Sir Frederick Treves' *Cradle of the Deep*, I threw myself into the congenial task of studying the history of the West Indies, the nursery of British sea power.

Twenty-five years ago the British West Indies were the Cinderella of our Imperial family and many of the islands keenly felt the Mother Country's neglect. The cruises of the modern ocean liners from Great Britain had not yet become a regular feature of trans-Atlantic travel. Visitors from the Old Country were few and far between. Before the development of flying, the islands were isolated.

In no other part of the world, to quite the same extent, can one recapture the atmosphere in which the British Empire was built up. As we sailed the Spanish Main I stepped back into the world of Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* I was again caught up in the glamour of the Elizabethans. What fun Sir Francis Drake, Frobisher and Hawkins must have had "singeing the King of Spain's beard," and plundering the treasure trove of His Catholic Majesty. I was back again in a world of golden ducats, pirates and the Inquisition. Modern Empire-building seemed tame in comparison. "In the afternoon we sighted Watling Island, the Bahamas, where Columbus landed

in 1492. Later we passed quite close to Bird Island, on which stands a lighthouse. Just a few palm trees and the British Ensign. It gave me a thrill." (*Diary*.)

"In the late afternoon the mountains of Jamaica hove into sight. There was a wonderful sunset, a purple sea and a sky of crimson, orange and salmon. This is my first experience of a British tropical colony. I cannot describe the wave of elation and emotion that swept over me. I had dreamt of this moment. The balmy air, the smell of cinnamon, nutmeg and strange spices, the dark faces on the badly lit quay, all combined to make me feel as in a dream. These strange beings were my fellow subjects. How wonderful to be a British citizen." (*Diary*.)

We loved Jamaica. In those happy days there were no speed boats, no seaplanes, no motors to disturb the peace. We drove along the excellent roads, through tropic groves and fern gullies, in a two-horse buggy, a coloured man with a nice soft voice, who had been thirteen years in the navy, was our coachman. "We went for a three mile drive to Stony Hill," (*Diary*) "my first real experience of the tropics. Such a drive—coconut palms, bananas, cotton and bread-fruit trees, mangoes, coffee plants, maidenhair ferns and bougainvillea. We passed strings of fine Negro women, with good figures, in coloured cotton frocks, carrying bananas and bread-fruit on their heads. At Stony Hill we went into the school and enjoyed an object lesson in the sway of Pax Britannica. A coloured teacher was instructing fifty little coloured children from text-books published in Paternoster Row. We drove back in the cool of the evening inhaling balmy air and perfumes from the hills."

Just outside Kingston is the beautiful public park of Hope Gardens. "Every kind of tropical plant is to be found here; there is a pergola of white jasmine, through which emerald green humming birds flit, and a background of blue mountains." (*Diary*.) On a Sunday evening we drove along the sea coast and in the villages we passed open air congregations. This was the first time I had seen black people at prayer. There was an old white-haired negro parson. The congregation was drawn up in

a large semi-circle. Torches and lanterns cast rays of light on the glistening faces of the intent worshippers. These curious "coon" voices shouted out the tunes of familiar hymns from our Ancient and Modern or Wesleyan hymnals. They put great fervour into their singing.

In the church at least there was no colour bar. These coloured folk were not only fellow subjects, they were co-religionists. Under the British flag they had found freedom and contentment. It was true we had been active in the slave trade, but we were among the first to see the error of our ways. I thanked God for Wilberforce. Jamaica taught me that the British World Empire must always stand for equal rights for every civilised human being.

I lunched with an old friend in the officers' quarters at Port Royal. "It must be a dreadful place to be quartered at, and I wonder the garrison does not become demoralised." (*Diary*.) I have often on subsequent visits to the tropics been lost in admiration for the white men who are true to their ideals. Everything conspires to pull one down. It is easy in the temperate zone to have ideals, with a bracing northern breeze blowing in your face but how remain steadfast in enervating heat that saps your very being? Temptations of the flesh become doubly dangerous in languorous tropic nights. A "green swizzle" or a "horse's neck" are seductive. Have another drink? Why not, who cares, what does anything matter? The real heroes are lonely white men, planters, missionaries, pioneers, unknown to their fellows, who remain masters of their souls. The unknown soldier has his tomb; I should like to erect a monument to the unknown hero, the lonely white man who refused to give in.

A young Imperialist had plenty of scope for his studies. Each town or colony had special ties with "men who had made the Empire." At Port Royal I visited Nelson's quarters, at Spanish Town there was the statue to Rodney, to celebrate his memorable victory over de Grasses in 1782, which secured for Great Britain her possessions in the Caribbean Sea. But the most impressive "shrine" was the place where Drake's body lies in the ocean depths

as he refused to be buried on the cursed soil of the Spanish Main. "He was buried a league out to sea, and on either side of him were sunk one of his own ships and his last taken Spanish prizes. The mail steamer as it follows the coast must pass over the very spot."*

At Colon you are on the edge of civilisation. "It is one of the least inviting places I have ever visited. Sir Frederick Treves calls it 'a slum without a town.' The trip across the isthmus by train—49 miles—takes about two and a half hours—it is a journey through rank tropic vegetation and black swamps. No wonder people used to die like flies." (*Diary*.)

My admiration for things American was growing. American enterprise and efficiency henceforth began to loom large in my mental horizon. As I made the railway journey across the isthmus of Panama—the golden road along which mule trains carried the wealth of Peru—and watched the construction work on the Canal, I was struck by American thoroughness. On one side of the railway track were the derelict French railway engines, the funnels sticking out of entwining creepers. Everywhere was debris left by Ferdinand de Lesseps. We passed the gigantic American Gatun lock nearing completion.

Colonel George W. Goethals and Colonel W. C. Gorgas and their helpers had fought and overcome the menace of the mosquito, they had rendered one of the most unhealthy zones in the world safe for the white man. The rows of little white crosses in the graveyards told the tragic story of the toll in human life which the tropic jungle was making in the ranks of the young Americans who had dared to invade its realm.

I was told that the chief goods traffic on the railway till recently consisted in "dead men in coffins." My informant may have been guilty of exaggeration, but my own eyes bore testimony in the cemeteries to the appalling death roll. The American "thinking department" soon recognised that the first foe to be overcome was the mosquito, and they overcame him. The story is one of the most splendid written in man's gradual mastery over

* Sir Frederick Treves, *The Cradle of the Deep*.

nature. "The white residents live in small one-storey houses, with a deep outside veranda, running right round the building, which look rather like meat-safes owing to the thin gauze netting with which they were enclosed. The work of Sir Patrick Manson and Sir Ronald Ross and other pioneers have made this great achievement possible. Panama is a human melting-pot. In the streets we met Peruvians, Italians, Chinese, Hindus, and the complexions of the inhabitants ranged from pure white to jet black with every gradation of brown, yellow and coffee." (*Diary.*)

We called in at Cartagena on the North Coast of South America, in the Republic of Colombia. "It is full of romance for an Englishman, as Drake captured it and remained here for six weeks. It was from here that the Spanish treasure galleons used to sail. I was interested to see a gun-boat belonging to the Colombian Navy. I was told that the Admirals wore spurs! though I cannot vouch for the accuracy of this statement. There is no colour prejudice here. There appears to be no social stigma in possessing a black skin." (*Diary.*)

Our West Indian tour ended with visits to beautiful Trinidad and Barbados. At Bridgetown we were rowed ashore in the *Lily White* by four swarthy Barbadians. Barbados is very British, having belonged to the Empire since 1605.

On the steamer home there were several sallow-faced officials who had done a term of service in the French penal colony of Cayenne. They looked listless, they were longing for *la belle France*.

A week after leaving Barbados, my diary records, "there is a slight snap in the air, which reminds me of home." On a dark December day my sister and I arrived at Waterloo. "Colombian love-bird, orchids, guava jelly and all." After my five months' absence I spent Christmas with my family in Ireland. "The hills were wonderfully beautiful, partly covered with snow. No view in the tropics ever gave me such real joy." (*Diary.*) Palms and tropic jungles were all very well, but I was glad I belonged to these Northern regions.

CHAPTER XVIII

FULL STEAM AHEAD

AFTER five months' absence I returned to the office on January 1st, 1909. "I drove down to the office in a four-wheeler, and found my room cheerful with flowers and looking as if I had never been away. Everyone was so nice to me from the doorkeeper upwards, and they all made tender enquiries about my health. Everything that I am connected with has been going along very satisfactorily and it makes all the difference returning when things are in such good running order." (*Diary*.)

I was determined not to go out much in society, but to sacrifice everything to my career, to become a thoroughly efficient human being. "These 5 months away have been of great value and have enabled me to size up things in their proper proportions. I hope to concentrate my energy on the big things only and if possible to develop every side of my nature—and above all be human." (*Diary*, Jan. 4). This entry referred to a talk I had had the previous year with a woman friend. She said to me that I was inhuman. "You do nothing without calculating the cost, your career comes first. You have no generous impulses, or rather, you would have, but you check them. What you require is to be head over heels in love." Evidently my friend's remarks had struck home. I was going to try to enter more into the problems of others, although for another year a successful career was still my chief ambition. I began systematic reading again, starting with Motley's *Dutch Republic*, and for lighter moments turning to Edward Fitzgerald, Lafcadio Hearn, Zola and Anatole France. I was also becoming increasingly interested in America and much of my reading was about the American Revolution and Washington.

I now looked upon myself as a horse-trainer no doubt regards a race horse. I was in the race for high stakes. I must keep fit, my will and mind must be kept in good trim. Mental and moral "physical jerks" were necessary—the daily dozen. I must try to be a worth-while person, not for the sake of goodness itself, but because goodness paid. If you wished to be successful, the wheels of the complicated piece of human machinery must revolve smoothly. "Just to test myself I have not taken any alcohol (*Diary*, March 5) for 2 weeks and I have not smoked since my illness."

On January 12th I made the biggest jump forward since I had joined Northcliffe's staff five years before. A letter to my father tells the happy news :

"I know you will be pleased to hear my good news. On Thursday I was summoned into the Chief's presence and found him and Mr. Harold* there. He told me that they had decided to put me in charge of the entire sales of the Amalgamated Press. This is what I have been trying for ever since last March, so it is very satisfactory. At first I shall go slow. I told him that I thought it was the biggest job in connection with the business and he said he thought so too. All the details I have fixed up with Mr. Harold this week. As a start my salary is increased by £10 a week, but I think that on the year the total will amount to very nearly £2,000.

"It is a great chance and means that the entire sales of the Amalgamated Press will now be in my hands. I am particularly pleased that Mr. Harold sees eye to eye with the Chief now on the matter."

In my diary of February 21st I recorded my rapid progress in the Amalgamated Press.

Jan. 28, 1907. Appointed Export Manager.

Feb. 14, 1908. Gave Northcliffe my idea of creating a selling organisation for the entire business.

May 14, 1908. Was appointed Sales Manager by Northcliffe but appointment was not confirmed by Mr. Harold.

Jan. 12, 1909. Finally appointed Sales Manager of the business by Northcliffe and Mr. Harold.

* Now Lord Rothermere.

I was especially glad now to have Mr. Harold's entire backing, as I had a great admiration for his business judgment, and as the Amalgamated Press was largely the creation of his financial genius. On January 20th I wrote "Had a long talk with Mr. H. about my appointment and fixed up financial details. He has never taken me so much into his confidence, and said that in a few years he will be wanting to retire from the business and that there is no reason why I should not be his successor . . . It is a tremendous opening, just the work I like, and granted good health I see no reason why we should not have the best organised Sales Dept. in England. My energy is if anything too much and I feel like champagne that has got to be corked down! I at last feel as if I had lived down my postcard failure."

When all the financial details concerning my new position had been fixed up, I wrote to Nothcliffe to tell him. I received the following letter :

HOTEL GASSION, PAU.

Feb. 4, 1909.

"MY DEAR EVELYN,

"I am very glad to hear that you are now settled in certainly one of the most important positions in the office, as regards the future.

"Your affectionate

"CHIEF."

Despite my promise to my parents not to work too hard, I spent the week-ends "scheming and thinking out plans." "The reorganising is thrilling. I have never had work I enjoyed so much—not even in the postcard days." Till the creation of the Sales Department the Amalgamated Press had chiefly relied for the sale of its sixty-odd papers on public demand. My scheme was to establish more friendly relations with the Trade, and by means of trade co-operation, through local representatives, to increase our turnover. My theory was that public demand *plus* willing co-operation with the trade would mean increased sales. I therefore created an efficient selling organisation in all parts of the country and I visited the leading wholesalers and studied our chief markets.

During the next three years I paid frequent visits to Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Cardiff, Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, Wolverhampton, the Lancashire cotton towns and the South Wales coalfields. Hitherto I had not known Great Britain as well as I knew some foreign countries. It was the first-hand knowledge of the conditions in our large cities that I got in these years that first woke up my social conscience. The slums and backstreets of our big towns made me an enthusiastic anti-slum crusader, and gave my political complacency a rude shake-up. Hitherto I had been a Unionist; I now began to mistrust Party politics. "After a morning making satisfactory arrangements with Messrs. Menzies at Edinburgh, B. W. Young and I walked through the streets of Leith to see the show our posters got, and we were well satisfied. Such squalid districts we passed through. How is one to help to raise the standard of the masses—it seems almost hopeless, but it must be done" (*Diary*, March 18). This social cancer eating away the vitals of our Empire disturbed me greatly.

The Amalgamated Press published every kind of newspaper and weekly from the educational journals like the Harmsworth *Encyclopedia*, Arthur Mee's *Children's Magazine*, down to periodicals for the masses like *Answers*, *Home Chat*, *Sunday Companion*, and *Comic Cuts*. Part of our work entailed the house-to-house distribution of instalments from our weeklies of serials crammed with love interest. A particularly lurid instalment was specially written for the occasion. We would distribute a couple of million leaflets. The opening chapter told of the mill-girl heroine, perhaps an orphan, alone in her modest bedroom. The son of the mill proprietor had flashing eyes, silky curly hair, a white Mercedes car. Apparently he had a way with women. There was a tap at the window, the mill-girl's heart throbbed—she opened the latch. "Not you," she faltered. The villain began to speak rapidly, incoherently. "Darling, I want you, need you, I cannot live without you." He put his hand on the window-sill—our heroine lived on the ground floor—and jumped with agile grace into her room. He . . .

Here the first instalment stopped. If you wished to know what happened to the heroine, you had to buy next week's copy of the World's most Wonderful Weekly . . . The job of the Sales Department was to cover England, Wales and Scotland with leaflets. We did our job. Not a house, not a family escaped. If a living human being in Great Britain did not know about our wares, it was not the fault of the Sales Department.

The contents of our periodicals were highly moral. If the villain seduced the virtuous maiden, he was always brought to book. The hard-working hero always ended up as head of the firm. True love was always requited. The receipt of the firm's periodicals was eagerly looked forward to each week in millions of homes. Nevertheless, twelve months later, I began to have uncomfortable thoughts. In 1910 I had been ten years in the rush and turmoil of the world of commerce. Could this be the final object of ambition?

In spite of the fact that part of me stood critically by I continued to be absorbed in my work; when Northcliffe invited me down to stay with him at Pau, near the Pyrenees, I said I could only spend five or six days away from London. Lord and Lady Northcliffe were staying at the Hotel Gassion, and the party included Kennedy Jones, Mrs. Charles Furse* and Arthur Mee. Northcliffe was absorbed in the Wright Brothers. A letter to my parents described my meeting with the two "bird men":

"Wilbur Wright and his brother Orville came to luncheon with us yesterday. They are both charming, absolutely natural and without any 'side.' They afford a wonderful instance of what concentration will do. They first flew in 1903 and since 1905 they have known just as much about flying as they do today, four years later. Ever since then they have been perfecting their machine.

"There is no question that the problem of flight is settled once for all and as Wilbur Wright says: 'Walking is a good deal more difficult.' He says that gliding, which is free-wheeling in the air, is the most delightful sensation he knows. The great use of aeroplanes in the next 25 years will be for military

* Dame Katherine Furse.

scouting purposes, he says. Their machines go at an average speed of 35 miles per hour, but cannot go slower than 25 and can go as far as one mile above the level of the sea.

"At lunch one could not help feeling that the world is progressing at a wonderful rate. There we were calmly sitting talking to two men who think no more of flying 25 or 35 miles than we do of going for an eight-mile walk, and listening from their lips to all their experiences in machines heavier than the air itself.

"Orville Wright is limping slightly as a result of his accident in America last Autumn, and it was very interesting hearing from him the story and exactly what made them take the problem of flight up. The Chief is very much interested in flying and is trying to get a flying machine delivered at the earliest possible moment. A. J. B.* seems to have greatly enjoyed his recent stay with the Chief here and wanted to go up into the air with Wilbur Wright, but the latter would not take him."

Next day my diary describes the first time I ever saw an aeroplane: "After lunch we motored down to the Champs d'Aviation and drove up to Wilbur Wright's shed. The whole thing is so wonderful that words are useless. We watched Wilbur carefully test every nut, wire and bolt. He usually spends half an hour testing everything himself before going up. When he was ready his pupil took his seat alongside him. He soars up with absolute ease and certainly the air has no longer any mystery as far as he is concerned. For twenty-two minutes they flew round and across the flying ground. The aeroplane looks wonderfully graceful in the air and especially so with the snow-covered Pyrenees in the background. On getting back had two hours alone with the Chief. He said '1908 was my *Times* year and 1909 will be my "periodical year" (that means my Sales Department).' He is very anxious for me 'to become Mr. Harold's right hand.' He says so far I have no enemies—long may this continue. He wants me to show myself at Carmelite House as much as possible and not cut off from the Associated Newspapers." This referred to the two great divisions of Northcliffe's business: the Amalgamated Press, which consisted of sixty-odd periodical weeklies and magazines, and the Associated Newspapers, which owned the *Daily Mail*, *Evening News*,

* Earl Balfour.

Weekly Dispatch and *Overseas Daily Mail*. At this time I was connected with both undertakings. I was also a director of the *Continental Daily Mail*, and Mr. Harold made me a director of *The Connoisseur*, the Art monthly.

On my return from France I threw myself into my work with redoubled energy. It was very encouraging to have the backing of the two heads of the business. During the next three years, till I resigned from my position on the Amalgamated Press, I came into almost closer contact with Mr. Harold than with his brother. "In the late afternoon I went round to 111-113, Great Titchfield Street with Mr. Harold and I showed him my scheme of reorganising the *Fashions for All* Pattern Department. I am going to put young Leslie Clarke in charge. Mr. H. quite approved of it, and so now I shall go full steam ahead." (*Diary*.)

"Mr. H. also told me he had approved of my scheme of reorganisation of the *Connoisseur* and that I was to go ahead with it." (*Diary*, May 12.) The barometer of my prospects was certainly "set fair." On May 17 I dined at the Savoy Grill with Mr. Harold, "he could not have been nicer or more encouraging. He said provided I played my cards properly I could be Chairman of the Amalgamated Press in ten years' and that the ball was at my feet. I certainly mean to kick it for all I am worth. He also wanted to give me the fashion papers to look after." (*Diary*, May 17.) "My colleague, Hamilton Edwards, editor of a group of papers, said: 'I can see £10,000 a year for you in the Amalgamated Press before long'; he little thinks that *that* will not satisfy me and that I am not only thinking of the money end of the game." (*Diary*, July 2.)

"The Chief has paid an unexpected visit to the Manchester office of the Sales Dept., which was the first thing I organised after my appointment as Sales Manager. I understand he was delighted with it and told several of my friends in the office that he had never seen such enthusiasm anywhere, which was very satisfactory." (*Letter home*.) A day in the Manchester office is thus described in my diary: "The office is full of enthusiasm,

and I don't wonder the Chief was pleased. I spoke for an hour to the assembled travellers on all manner of subjects and I think managed to put some enthusiasm into them. Then dashed round office and shook hands with everyone. Then saw the Wholesalers. Lunch with the Manager of W. H. Smith's. Spent the afternoon in Liverpool going round to see the wholesalers. Was well satisfied with visit. Rivvy Grenfell* was in the train back to London, and I dined with him and had a nice talk about business organisation."

The work of Sales Manager was extremely varied as it brought me into touch with every side of "the largest periodical business in the world," in addition to which I was frequently asked to do odd jobs or give advice. As a relaxation after a very busy day "judged at the *Evening News* Skating Carnival at Olympia in place of Seymour Hicks." (*Diary*.) A letter, written in March, states "I am starting a Buying Agency Department for the Chief, in connection with *The Times* Weekly Edition, so there is plenty to keep me busy." This was the only occasion that I was connected with *The Times*, apart from acting as a "special" for them for two weeks ten years later.

The chief event in my publishing diary was the launching of a new weekly called the *Family Journal*. It was the first big job undertaken by the new Sales Department. "All this week has been very busy completing final arrangements for the *Family Journal*. It is a record in the history of the firm and the first orders are 691,000. I hope the Chief will be pleased." (*Diary*.) "Our whole selling staff has been working at fever heat and we must have 1,500 emergency people working as well. It all went off splendidly and was the biggest first issue we ever printed . . . On Monday I dined with Mr. H. at his flat in the Hyde Park Hotel and we had a three hours' business discussion. He took me much more into his confidence than ever before." (*Letter home*.)

This was the most successful year of my career with Northcliffe. I had no set-backs. All my undertakings

* One of the Grenfell twins, who was killed in the war. He was at Eton with me.

prospered. Every new task entrusted to me I took on with alacrity. I deputed all detail work. I tried to imitate the Chief. I surrounded myself with "right-hand" assistants. One of them was poor Leslie Clarke, who subsequently rose to great heights in the publishing business and died at the early age of thirty-five. Another was Cuthbert Clark, one of the best salesmen and "enthusiasm generators" I ever met. On the Overseas *Daily Mail*, I had as chief assistant poor Cotton, who was killed in the war.

I do not think any concern ever had a better selling organisation. I studied American publications and selling methods. I read a New York paper, called, I think, *The Salesman*—it was devoted to super-salesmanship—how to turn the waverer into a customer. I organised the first gathering of the Amalgamated Press outside representatives on a large scale. "At 10.0 the whole travelling staff and sales department assembled at Room 4, Salisbury Hotel. B. W. Young opened the proceedings and then I took the chair. I spoke for over an hour and a half. Mr. Harold came in about half-way through, at which I was very pleased. Mr. H. told me afterwards he thought the ceremony was magnificent. The Chief came in to see me in the afternoon and spent two hours in my room. Mr. H. gave a dinner at the White City to the travelling staff. It went off very well. They have all returned to their work full of beans and fresh energy." (*Diary*, June 21.)

Shortly after he came to live in England, I made friends with an organiser, for whose business daring I had great admiration. As early as 1906 Gordon Selfridge told me of his scheme of starting a great store in London. When I went to Chicago he gave me letters of introduction to his old firm, Messrs. Marshall, Field & Co. I used to visit him in his little first floor office on the south side of Oxford Street, where he showed me blue-prints of his projected store. In 1909 my diary of February 5th records: "Had a most interesting lunch with Selfridge. He certainly is one of the most forceful Americans I know, and I feel sure that, granted good health, he will revolutionise the drapery and large store business in this country. His whole business career is an object lesson in concentration.

He took me right over the building, floor by floor and dept. by dept. It was just 10 months ago that I climbed the girders with him and felt dizzy doing so."

The growth of the German naval menace was now generally admitted. There are frequent references to the subject in my diary. "Lunched with the Chief and Lady N. Garvin was there. The one topic of conversation was the naval situation and we all listened to Garvin holding forth. He is full of Jackie Fisher, and says we must lay down 8 Dreadnoughts this year and not one less. The Chief says the country must insist, so I am sure we shall get them. The strength of the Navy is the only subject talked of in London." In those days I was an enthusiastic "Big-navyite," as I hoped that a supreme Navy would prevent war. It never occurred to me then that other nations might also want a supreme navy. Or perhaps it would be more truthful to say that Germany's naval aspirations puzzled me. Why couldn't she be satisfied with a supreme army? There certainly was no army to touch the German army. The Russian, perhaps, in numbers, but not in efficiency and equipment. In the meantime, might was undoubtedly right, and, might or no might, right would certainly be on the British side, whatever the trouble. I also saw Lord Roberts several times in these years, and he was insistent that we must be prepared. I was not ready to enter upon involved discussions about the rights of other nations to outbuild us on the sea: "What we have we hold." We had the best parts of the world; it was our job to look after our property.

After going to see the play, "An Englishman's Home," I wrote: "How long will it be before we conservative creatures do the obvious and adopt Conscription modelled on the Swiss system?" In April I spent a week-end at Sutton Place—"It was a case of Dreadnoughts from morning till night." I now saw more of my godfather, Sir Evelyn Wood. "Dined with Sir E. as his guest at the Fishmongers Hall. It was my first City Dinner. Such a feed—turtle soup, and I know not what else. Oh, what waste! I told my Godpapa that if I were a poor man I would be a Socialist, when I knew that all these pro-

sperous city magnates were gorging at a cost of £2.0.0. per head . . . Passed 200 unemployed on my way home, shuffling along the Embankment on their way to a soup kitchen. The cost of my dinner would have fed the lot. Think of it." (*Diary*, March 25.)

A few weeks later I spent a week with my godfather at Millhurst, Harlow, Essex. "To church with Sir E. Had long and interesting talks with him during the day on all manner of subjects, from Army Reform to Religion. He is certainly much the most capable soldier I have met, and I wonder why he was never made Commander-in-Chief. I like him tremendously, he is so full of vitality and interest for seventy-one. In his view the three biggest men he has ever met are (1) Lord Canning, (2) Lord Salisbury, (3) Sir William Peel. I was surprised at his choice." (*Letter home*.)

I spent the Easter week-end at Sutton Place with the Northcliffes and we talked of little else but the Navy. "Several people came over to lunch, including F. E. Smith. I was interested in seeing him as I heard so much about him. He looks as if he were suffering from swelled head, but has a capable face . . . Walked about the wild garden all afternoon talking to Garvin. He told me the whole story of his life—how at twenty-two he began on the *Newcastle Chronicle*." (*Diary*, April 11.)

"A large luncheon party. The St. Loe Strachey's and Gerald Balfour came over. I sat next Gerald Balfour and we discussed Ireland. In the afternoon went for a walk with Garvin and we discussed our ideals and the tremendous fight we are going to have for the Empire during the next 20 years. As Garvin says, whether we win or not, when we die we want to be able to feel we have fought like men . . . I had an interesting talk with old Moberley Bell in the evening about his time in Egypt and all the trouble there in the early 'eighties.' He has been on the staff of *The Times* for over 45 years and first joined the paper before the Chief was born."

The first mention of Northcliffe's health occurs in May, 1909. He had been suffering from his eyes and was going again to Germany for three weeks' special treatment.

From now on I made frequent references to the Chief's health. A year later he was "suffering from neurasthenia." I discussed his health with Lady Northcliffe, who was worried about it. I have often wondered when the malady from which he died, and which affected his mind, first began to show itself. Certainly for many years before he died Northcliffe was unduly irritable. As I look back upon him, I think I would make a dividing line about the end of 1909—the Northcliffe before that period, kind and considerate, occasionally angry, perhaps, but who, on the whole, would see reason in the long run—the Northcliffe subsequent to 1909, liable to moods, and subject to megalomania. Formerly, Northcliffe would never permit his name to appear in his papers. After 1909 all this restraint vanished. I like to think that the real Northcliffe was the Chief I knew during the first six years of my association with him.

The first meeting of the Imperial Press Conference in June, 1909, organised by Sir Harry Brittain, made a great impression on me. The calling together in London of the journalists from every part of the Empire was a great conception. I was proud to be a member of the Committee. The opening function of the 1909 Conference was a banquet at the White City, when the speech of welcome was made by Lord Rosebery. "The inaugural Empire Press Dinner on Saturday was a tremendous success and Rosebery's speech magnificent. The Chief thinks it is the best speech he has ever heard, and fully worthy of the occasion. Certainly I never heard a better speech. I am sure no one present will ever forget Rosebery's eloquence. He conjured up before the minds of his hearers, many of whom were visiting the old country for the first time, a vista of peaceful England and its picturesque old-world hamlets, nestling round the village church. He is a real orator—if only there were more behind all that eloquence. . . . This Conference is going to be a turning point in the history of Imperial relationships." (*Letter home.*)

"Attended the Imperial Press Conference on Imperial Defence at Downing Street. It was intensely interesting. Balfour, Haldane and Roberts spoke. This Conference

is going to do a great amount of good, and is quite the greatest thing that has taken place since the South African War from the standpoint of bringing the self-governing Dominions together." (*Diary*, June 9.)

The delegates were fêted wherever they went. They were shown various aspects of British life, a special Naval Review was organised in their honour. They returned to their homes with a fresh vision of Empire. Across the Atlantic I had been taught that "the twentieth century belonged to Canada." I now knew that it belonged in a special degree to the British Empire as a whole. I pitied the unfortunate peoples of other nations who had no such glorious Imperial heritage. I took out of my office drawer my scheme for starting a great Empire movement, and pondered over it. Perhaps by next year the psychological time for launching it would have arrived.

Going back to the work of the Sales Department seemed a come-down. For fleeting moments I began to marvel at the enthusiasm I had put into building up our selling organisation earlier in the year. But this was absurd. No thoughts, these, for a Sales Manager. So I plunged again into a series of provincial visits to our chief customers. I went to Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Leeds, Bradford and Blackpool. I was also responsible for the organisation of our seaside campaign—a very important undertaking. Tens of thousands of our readers took their families to the seaside. Our selling organisation followed them. In every seaside resort we had sand-castle competitions, *Answers* prizes, poster displays, special pierrot shows. I made a four-day tour of the South Coast towns in a hired forty Daimler, from Herne Bay to Bournemouth, stopping at every seaside resort on the route. "At Margate we are carrying on a wonderful boom with sand-castle competitions. Our rival publications were literally off the map." (*Diary*.) At Sutton Place during a week-end in June I met "the dear little live Teddy Bear belonging to the *Daily Mirror*! I tried to get the loan of it for our seaside campaign. But Teddy was growing up and there were fears that he would be too ferocious. Besides, Teddy was on the staff of the *Daily Mirror*." (*Diary*.)

Life was very full. I became more and more interested in Empire subjects. Sometimes at the Sales Conference to discuss the great Autumn boom of one of our popular weeklies, I would find my mind roaming across the seas. I was always having to discipline myself now, and make my mind concentrate on my job. I asked myself one day what did it matter in the long run whether the *Weekly* — had a sale of 600,000 or 500,000? What terrible views! Thank heaven there were no thought-readers about. I tried to drown these questionings of my mind by working extra hard. I worked early and late. Lady Northcliffe took me to task. "Edwards told me that the Chief is much worried about my health and is afraid I am overworking." (*Diary*.) In June there is another entry: "Was rather tired and the Chief told me I was working too hard." In my diary for Sunday, May 23, I find that I "spent the whole day at the office and got thro' a tremendous amount of work. I am working now harder than at any time in my life, and my work is better in the sense of producing results."

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"Was rung up by the Chief when I was in my bath. I am to report for duty on the *Empress of Britain* on Friday week, August 27th, to go with him to Canada and the United States. It was a surprise to me. However, it will be very nice, having that quiet time with him. I am to do all his secretarial work. Our party is to be the Chief, Lady Northcliffe, Moberley Bell, Mrs. Charles Furse and myself." (*Diary*, August 16.)

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In retrospect I think that it would have been better if I had refused to go with Northcliffe on this trip to Canada and the United States. I could have pleaded my mother's illness or made an excuse about the business requiring my presence. But only those who knew Northcliffe well will understand how difficult this would have been. Northcliffe's instructions were not easily set aside. Nevertheless from the position of my career at the Amalgamated

Press, I would have been wise to have got out of escorting Northcliffe. I began to be regarded with jealousy. I was in too high favour and there were murmurings about my "frequent absences." But the chance of spending six weeks in such close proximity with the Chief in my dear North America was too much for me. Go I would. Our trip across the Atlantic was uneventful. We had an excellent voyage on the *Empress of Britain*. I got plenty of practice for my shorthand and typing. Frequently I regretted my inadequate speed; when the Chief went rushing ahead I was struggling a couple of sentences behind.

I had never travelled in a "Private Car" before. It was exciting seeing the large Pullman Car "Independence" drawn up near the landing stage at Quebec. It was a "home" on wheels. There were four private cabins, a dining-room, an observation room, where we spent most of the day, and an observation platform at the rear, where we sat in hot weather. There was an excellent English-born conductor and two coloured attendants.

The Independence was our home for five weeks and we travelled 9,000 miles in it, in Canada and the United States. Our nights were usually spent in railway sidings, and we were hitched on to the desired train by day. We were always the last carriage in the train, so that we could get an unimpeded view of the country, through which we were passing, from our observation platform. I was glad to be in Canada again. As I lay awake in my sleeping berth in the mornings—my berth was over Mr. Moberley Bell's and I did not like to get up too early, so as not to disturb him—my spirit soared over the great spaces of the Canadian West. All the glamour I had felt three years before returned. Empire-building was really the only thing worth while. Somehow or other I must take a hand in it.

From that moment I think my mind was made up, although I did not realise it at the time. Little did Northcliffe know that through taking me to Western Canada and the United States he was adding to my Imperial ardour and making me less and less inclined to devote myself to a business career—advancing the Empire's interests

in those vast territories was fifty times more exciting than Fleet Street.

We spent a fortnight in the Canadian West. We went over the recently built Grand Trunk Pacific, we visited new towns. We saw how towns start. We were in at the beginning of the human drama. Farmers from Ontario, from the "States," from the Old Land, from Eastern Europe, would take up land, the railroad would decide on a *dépôt*, then a motley crowd would arrive—"Dagos" and "Bohunks," Jews and Gentiles, every type of man that God ever made. A general store, built of wood, would be opened in main "street"—a funny kind of street—just a strip of Mother Earth. Next came a saloon—you must slake your thirst—then came the real estate man, where you saw wonderful plans of what the "burg" would look like in ten years.

I got bitten with the craze to own some of the Canadian West myself. "Kind" Canadian friends were only too glad to help me to gratify my ambition! They wanted British capital.

They wanted me to get in on the ground floor. I got in and remained there. For fourteen years I paid school and other taxes, and then in despair surrendered my title deeds. I wonder what has happened to my lovely corner lots on the future main street of Blankville!

In 1909, however, I was not worrying about the sordid dollar, I wanted to be in the swim. It was very exciting travelling along railway tracks which had only been laid on the virgin prairie a few months previously. I was allowed to drive one of the great clanging Canadian locomotives with a cow-catcher.

Northcliffe was much interested in the local newspapers. At each wayside station I would have to go to the book-stall and buy one copy of every separate newspaper on sale. Sometimes I would return to our Pullman staggering under a load of twenty or thirty American papers. No wonder his eyes gave him trouble! On hot afternoons in September he would spend hours poring over the contents of these papers, looking for ideas for his own publications. The size of the American Sunday papers nauseated me. I thought

regretfully of the thousands of acres of spruce cut down to make pulp for one Sunday's papers in the United States.

A visit to San Francisco in 1909 was a very interesting experience. Such was the energy and enterprise of the inhabitants that, although it was only three years since the earthquake,* an entirely new city had arisen. San Francisco was showing Seattle and other upstarts just "where they belonged." There were few signs of the fire or of the earthquake. When I looked out from my bedroom window in the Fairmount Hotel, which commanded a view of the whole city, I could not believe my eyes. There can have been few examples in history of such civic enterprise and energy. San Francisco, with its Spanish history, its memories of the Gold Rush, and its recent links with Robert Louis Stevenson, cast a spell on the visitor.

Northcliffe had originally intended to return to Montreal by the direct route. Ever since my first visit to the United States my great desire had been to visit the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. I persuaded him to make the detour through Arizona by the Santa Fé railroad. We therefore proceeded to Williams, Arizona, by way of Los Angeles. The day spent at the El Tovar Hotel on the "lip" of the Grand Canyon is one of the vividest memories of my life. The hotel was a great log-hut, owned by the Railway Company, and managed by the famous Fred Harvey, who hailed from England.

The Grand Canyon of the Colorado River is the world's greatest natural wonder. As well might a midge attempt to probe the mysteries of the Pole Star as a mortal try to depict this region of the gods. Never have words seemed so inadequate. Through millions of years the Colorado River has gradually worn away the strata of rock and a couple of miles below, it flows—a tortuous ribbon of silver. As you look over the El Tovar parapet, you are in a world where time and space do not count.

The Canyon is a playground of the gods, grooved out of the earth's surface, two hundred miles long, ten to forty miles wide and a couple of miles deep. A mile below you

* The San Francisco earthquake took place on 18th April, 1906.

look down on an eagle soaring in the air. It is a wonder world, range after range of mountain of every colour in the rainbow: yellow, gold, mauve, pink and blue. At every hour of the day the colours vary. Far away below, you see a mule track zig-zagging down the side of the cleft. On it tiny specks of humanity are making their way to the river gorge. The atmosphere is crystal clear. When you look across the Canyon you cannot believe that in places you are seeing thirty or forty miles straight ahead of you. America has many scenic wonders, but the Grand Canyon stands alone. It is worth travelling round the world to see. After the Grand Canyon everything else was tame.

In New York I met my friend Mr. F. N. Doubleday and his partner, Dr. Walter Hines Page, with whom I talked over my American experiences. I had caught the buoyancy and enthusiasm of the West and my American friends were pleased to find an Englishman glowing with enthusiasm for their country. American engineering prowess at Panama, American greatness in disaster at San Francisco, and American inventiveness, typified by the Wright brothers, had won my unbounded admiration. Our talk wandered to the cause of British-American discords. How could we achieve lasting friendship between our countries? There was woeful ignorance about the modern British Empire in the United States in 1909. Five years later Dr. Page was United States Ambassador at the Court of St. James. In dark hours he acted as interpreter of one nation to the other.

This was my third visit to the United States. I became henceforth increasingly interested in the relations of the two great sections of the English-speaking world, the British Commonwealth and the United States. Our destinies were bound together and the British and American peoples had a great part to play in the world. This conviction resulted in the founding of the English-speaking Union nine years later.

CHAPTER XIX

VISION

"The capacity of perfectability is indefinite in man."—*Dante*.

THE year 1910 was the turning-point in my life, although I did not fully realise the fact at the time. My diary started on a more modest note. "I won't begin the year by making any good resolutions, all I hope is that I shall always play the game." My affairs continued to prosper. I was still in high favour with Northcliffe. "I had three hours with the Chief at St. James's Place on Wednesday afternoon and had such a nice talk with him. He was in bed as he has been suffering from a chill since his return. He was wonderfully full of vitality and is running the whole country as far as I can make out." (*Letter home*.) "The Chief said at this talk, 'I do not wish you to become a departmental head.' He said he wants me to devote more time to studying the contents of the Amalgamated Press publications." (*Diary*.)

This was the first time that Northcliffe mentioned his future plans for me. He wanted me ultimately to become editor-in-chief of his vast periodical business. I was flattered, but unhappy because I was sure he was making a mistake. I felt out of sympathy with these popular weeklies. I remembered my brief editorship of the *Weekly Dispatch* in 1905. But presumably the Chief knew best, so I said nothing and went on with my ordinary work.

The sales of our Export Department had doubled in in the three years since I had been in control. Home sales were booming. We were discussing adding an extra million circulation to our publications before the end of the year. I continued to visit the Provinces and get in direct touch with leading wholesalers. On July 29th Sir Harold made a very satisfactory profit-sharing arrangement

with me and gave me a contract for a term of years. My financial future was now assured. Under the terms of my contract, apart from my ordinary salary, I was to receive three quarters of one per cent. of the Almagamated Press profit over £200,000 and up to £300,000 and one and a half per cent. on the nett profits over £300,000, including Newfoundland. In 1912, my last year with the firm, I made just on £5,000.

That contract to-day would mean an income of five figures. There was only one fly in the ointment. I no longer felt that the most important thing in the world, or rather in my world, was to increase the sales of our publications. I never could get the best out of myself unless I was convinced of the importance of my work. I began to have doubts—doubts whether I was making the best use of my life. But this was absurd. I was now in one of the most envied positions in the Northcliffe entourage. I stifled my doubts and got on with the job.

I no longer worked during the week-ends. I had taken up golf; I went to Sandwich for change of "atmosphere." Golf depression was almost as bad as office depression. I started taking golf lessons. Before very long I was driving straight down the fairway. Golf seemed easy. Why all this fuss about the perfect swing? Then something happened—I developed a slice. The more I tried to correct it the more I sliced. Going round St. George's Links became a penance—this was no place for a golfer who was either topping or slicing his drive. There was not a tuft of rushes or a sandy cavern on the face of the Maiden Bunker that I did not know intimately. Why had I started golf? Why—anyhow I forgot office worries.

A letter from Northcliffe, which I received during a short holiday on the Riviera, ends up:

"Paris *D. Mail* v.g.—but why no company ads.? King Edward had bad poisoned throat at Biarritz. Don't hurry back. The more you *see* the more you *earn*. Paris is the home of new ideas. Go and see Poiret's dress shop.

"Getting well, my dear Evelyn, is the slowest work I've done. I have had a bad week of it. Perhaps the heat has been too

great. If ever I over-work again I shall deserve another dose of this wearisome business. Take warning by me and work only five days a week.

"Your affectionate
"CHIEF."

From now on Northcliffe had frequent bouts of ill-health. In June 1910 my diary contains this entry: "The Chief came into my room for fifteen minutes. I was never more surprised in my life. He looked bronzed and not so fat, but restless, and his health is unquestionably getting on his his nerves." A month later I wrote "The Chief is slowly getting better and I have had several letters from him. He has been quite seedy." (*Letter home.*)

Northcliffe had told me of King Edward's illness. The next mention of it appears on May 6th. "The King is ill." The following day I was golfing at Sandwich. "Rang up the office at 6.45 a.m. from the Guildford Hotel and heard that the King died at a quarter to twelve last night. It is difficult to realise, it has been so sudden. I believe King George V will be a much greater ruler than is generally supposed. His training in the Navy and his travels round the Empire should stand him in good stead." (*Diary, May 7.*) "How dreadfully sudden it all was about the King. I knew on Thursday that he was ill and on Friday afternoon I was told that they had little hope of his recovery, but I imagine most people were taken completely by surprise. Of course he was a bad subject to resist any sudden attack, and at Biarritz they were very frightened about him." (*Letter home.*) "Saw the King's funeral from the Marlborough Club where I was in the greatest comfort. I went to the Memorial Service at Westminster Abbey in the afternoon; the music was wonderful." (*Diary, May 20.*)

How paint to the sensual eye what passes in the Holy of Holies of man's soul? In what words . . . speak even afar off of the unspeakable? — *Carlyle.*


The music at the Memorial Service in Westminster

Abbey was wonderful. During the service Funeral Marches by Beethoven, Tschaikowsky, Mendelssohn, Purcell and Chopin were played. As I listened to the organ I seemed to hear the pent-up emotion of all who had suffered down the ages. The organ notes, soaring up to the roof, caught up my soul. I was shaken to the foundations of my being. I was linked up with all who had suffered.

I saw pale-faced men and women in the slums, underfed, under-sized children, children with withered legs in iron supports, and sunk-eyed hunchbacks. I thought of all poor sinners—I was a sinner, I understood—of the misery and sordidness in life, of the suffering animal creation. How could such things be? What was the meaning of life? Love was the key to the riddle—only the Eternal Verities counted. Christ stood at the heart of all suffering. He alone was Rest, all else was unrest. Allegiance to Him was the only possible aim.

The scales fell from my eyes. I stood outside my former self, the business organiser, the careerist. Party allegiance fell from me like a worn-out garment. I vowed I would devote my life to great causes—to the Empire, to my fellows. From that moment my fate was decided. My days with Northcliffe were numbered.

I saw in a flash the Divine conception of man. That each human being should be a temple of the Holy Spirit; I knew that in each one of us there was a spark of the Divine. That spark must be fanned into a flame. How could I have thought personal advancement was the goal for an immortal soul? In the presence of these immensities ambition left me. My ambition—in this atmosphere it withered like a plucked windflower.



CHAPTER XX

LINKING UP THE EMPIRE—THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

I WAS now living in a new world, as different from my old world as if I had crossed ten thousand miles of ocean. The list of books read shows that my interests were expanding. Fielding Hall's *Soul of a People*, *The Working Faith of a Social Reformer*, Bosanquet's *Poor Law Report*, J. S. Mill *On Liberty*, Davidson's *Education of the Greek People*, Cotterill's *Human Justice for Those at the Bottom*, *Life of Father Dolling*, Francis Thompson's *St. Ignatius Loyola*. I wanted to prepare myself for my Empire work, which I was sure was coming, but just how or when I did not know. As I walked over the Sandwich Golf Links listening to the larks singing as they soared overhead I heard unseen voices, I felt linked up with unseen powers.

I found the task of putting enthusiasm into my Sales Department work more and more difficult. When we had business discussions about our new publications and seaside booms I felt a hypocrite. It was hollow mockery. I tried to look absorbed in the task at hand. I said the same words that I had said a year ago, but I knew there was a different ring about them. My aspirations were elsewhere. I exercised all the self-control I was capable of. It was my duty. I had one of the best paid jobs in the firm. I must render adequate service in return. I worked just as hard, I dictated just as many letters, I gave just as many interviews, I sent encouraging messages to our outside representatives, I thought out new methods of pushing sales. The real me stood uncomprehendingly by. The only way I could get any of my old enthusiasm back was to think of my staff—my right-hand man, the manager of our Manchester office and his family, our travellers, many of whom I had appointed myself. It was not fair to them not to try my utmost. I thought of priests

who had lost their Faith, and had to go on acting as if it were still the motive power of their lives.

I threw myself with exaggerated energy into an inspection of our selling organisation in Lancashire. I went to Blackpool, Preston, Bolton, Blackburn, Burnley, Accrington, Stockport, returning to Manchester each evening. I spent two days in Manchester inspecting our poster shows. Our staff had worked wonders, the hoardings and news-agents' shops were literally plastered with our "Bills." I ought to have felt a thrill—but something was dead in me. I was much more interested in studying the squalor of the industrial North. Was this the outcome of our civilisation?

"One must see Lancashire to understand it. It is one vast town. How colourless are the lives of most of the people. Can one wonder that they are Socialists or anything else? Out to Oldham by taxi. Spent all the morning going round Platt Brothers—the largest manufacturers of cotton machinery in the world. Watched 13,000 workpeople come out at lunch time—a jostling, hurrying crowd that surged out of the factory gates like a great black river. *Quelle vie, quelle vie!* Just think of looking forward to nothing else all one's immortal life!—In the afternoon was taken over a very up-to-date mill. Saw the barefooted mill-girls at work. After dinner finished reading the *Creed of Buddha*. Enjoyed it greatly. The two great lessons self-control and sympathy." (*Diary*, June 2.)

About this time I gave up smoking and taking alcohol and it was fourteen years before I broke my self-imposed ban. I returned from Lancashire straight to Eton, where I spent the week-end with Edward Lyttelton, then head master. "I always enjoy being down here—such a change after Lancashire. Till one has been about the country, one has no idea of what industrial England is really like. What a dull colourless life most of the people there lead." (*Letter home*.)

The sights I was seeing throughout the country were giving me an entirely different political outlook. Which Party was in power was no longer the supreme problem.

Conservative, Liberal, Labour—each had their good and bad points. The one essential was that each should have a policy of real social reform.

"On Monday last I opened the debate at the Sylvan Debating Club on the desirability of Home Rule all round, including Ireland, and I carried the day." (*Letter home.*)

My friendship with Norman Angell was always a joy to me. I had a great admiration for his intellectual powers. He was a man with a message. Also he was more or less in my position; he was with Northcliffe and yet I knew his real interests lay elsewhere. The present generation can have little idea of the sensation which Angell's *Great Illusion* made on the pre-war mentality.

"Angell's book has created a tremendous interest . . . Angell is continually hearing from all sorts of people interested in his theories, from Carnegie downwards." (*Letter home.*)

"His book has created a furore, and Lord Esher wrote to him and said that everyone from King Edward down to Mr. Balfour had read it and they all were tremendously impressed by it." (*Letter, June 15, 1910.*)

"Angell is naturally much pleased at the attention his book is getting. The German Emperor, King of Italy, Haldane and hundreds of others have read it." (*Letter from Paris, Feb. 13.*)

"Yesterday morning Angell and I walked over the cliffs to lunch to a delightful little place called Pourville. We talked philosophy, Herbert Spencer, disarmament. He has practically rewritten his book, and it is going to be re-published in October and at the same time is to appear in Swedish, Spanish, French, German, Italian and also in America." (*Letter from Dieppe, August 7, 1910.*)

"Dinner with Angell at the Savoy. The £1,000 he is drawing from his book he is spending in propagating the cause. It is splendid of him." (*Diary.*)

In 1910 I met again a school friend, Shane Leslie. "Shane Leslie lunched with me and we went down to see Borstal Prison, near Chatham—a place I had long been meaning to visit. We spent two hours there and were shown everything by the head warden, a very nice man,

who was Oscar Wilde's gaoler in Reading Gaol. It was all most instructive and the fact that sixty per cent. of their boys reform their lives on getting out, speaks for itself." (*Letter*, Sept. 25, 1910.)

"Yesterday morning Shane Leslie and I spent the morning at Wormwood Scrubbs Prison. It was most interesting—we went over every section. There are 1,400 prisoners. On the whole I was very favourably impressed. Of course, the convicts and the habitual criminals are a depressing sight, and you can see in their faces why they are within prison walls. I am glad to say that they have introduced the Borstal system here for all young offenders. The Governor tells me it is hopeless to try to reform the *adult* criminal—i.e., the criminal over twenty-four. He also said that hundreds of prisoners on getting out are obliged to commit another crime and be recommitted as there is no work for them to do. It is too awful to think of." (*Letter*, Oct. 2, 1910.)

I became interested in the work of the Borstal Association owing to the inspiration of Sir Wemyss Grant Wilson, and undertook to visit some of the families in London of the boys at Borstal. "Paid my first 'Borstal' call in the evening to a woman in Leather Lane Buildings, Clerkenwell. This was my first insight into real London squalor and poverty. It is too terrible to think that there are 2,000,000 people living in this condition in London. I do hope that my interest in this kind of work will not cease, and that in my life I shall be able to improve conditions." (*Diary*, August 12.) For some time I undertook to pay regular visits to the Hollingden Boys Club in Clerkenwell, also run by Grant Wilson. But when I definitely embarked on my Empire crusade eighteen months later, I had to give up all these extraneous activities.

Early in September a very arresting person walked into my office—Joseph Thorp, dramatic critic of *Punch* for nineteen years. Peter, as he is known to many, is one of my closest friends. He came to tell me of a movement which he had started called the Agenda Club. Broadly speaking it aimed at bringing together in a fellowship all who wanted to make the world a better place than they had found it.

It was going to take up every kind of social work. The scheme made a great appeal to me, as it did to many others, and I hoped that the Agenda Club had a great career of usefulness before it. Thorp had all the necessary inspiration and enthusiasm for a leader. I attended many Agenda meetings and group conferences. The Agenda Club was a great conception; outwardly it failed eighteen months later. Thorp's health was not up to the job, also he should have had a business organiser at his elbow. But in reality the Agenda Club did not fail, it inspired many. I owe a great debt to Joseph Thorp for the lamp he lit by his idealism.

When I look back on my life, 1910 stands out as the Overseas Club year. For four years I had kept wondering whether the right moment had arrived for launching my Imperial scheme, thought out in Canada after my stay with Lord Grey. I now knew the moment was at hand. I was ready for my crusade. I spent a week-end in June at Milton Court, near Dorking, an old Elizabethan house. "A nice quiet morning in the orchard here, with pale mauve irises and pergola of roses just beside me, thinking out details of my Imperial League. . . . Finished Fuller's *Life of Rhodes*. . . . Slept out under the pine trees. Too wonderful looking up at the stars." (*Diary*, June 12.)

In the middle of August, Northcliffe paid daily visits to me in my room in Bouverie Street.

"The Chief spent a couple of hours in my room." (Aug. 17th.)

"The Chief spent over an hour in my room." (Aug. 18th.)

"The Chief in my office for long time." (Aug. 19th.)

On the last-named day after we had finished talking about the *London Magazine*, *Everywoman's Encyclopædia* and *Answers*, I reminded him of my scheme of starting a great Imperial League to be called the Overseas Club, which I had first broached at Seville, two years before. I showed him the article I had written for the *Overseas Daily Mail* describing the proposal. Northcliffe was interested and told me I might publish it the following week. I had a large dark red leather sofa in my room. I can see him lying at full length on it as I described my scheme,

with his back to the light, on account of his eyes, puffing at one of his cheap German cigars.

I was aflame with enthusiasm. I wanted to create a great Brotherhood of Service, which would be to the Empire what the German Navy League was to Germany, a kind of "Imperial" Salvation Army—an organisation "to draw together in the bond of comradeship the peoples now living under the folds of the British flag." My League was to be "strictly non-party, non-sectarian and open to any British subject." Every applicant for membership was to receive a coloured certificate signed by me in facsimile, as organiser, but there was to be no annual subscription.

How I thought it would be possible to conduct a society like this without any revenue I do not know. No doubt I hoped to receive large donations from my friends. I felt that my mission in life was to unite the Empire. Within a fortnight of my article appearing, letters and enquiries began to arrive. "The Overseas Club has now 160 members. I wonder how many it will have by this time next year. I feel more and more that it is to be one of the things I am to devote my life to." (*Diary*, Sept. 9.)

A few days later I was disturbed to find that some of my colleagues in the office regarded the Overseas Club just as a circulation scheme for the Overseas edition of the *Daily Mail*. Such an idea had never entered my head. The Overseas edition was a weekly edition of the *Daily Mail* and since its second number, when I was appointed editor, I had tried to give it a definitely Imperial tone. I considered that it ought to back the Overseas Club just as it had backed the Empire Rifle Contest or any other Empire project, without thought of benefit to itself. "I keep telling everyone at the office that I don't want it to be regarded as a sordid scheme for benefiting circulation. My ideal is something vastly grander than that. I believe that it will become a great power for good in the world and I hope our ideas will grow as we expand." (*Diary*, Sept. 14.)

"Can think of nothing but my Club." (*Diary*, Sept. 29.)

"Felt tremendously excited about the Overseas Club.

It is wonderful the way people are responding." (*Diary*, Oct. 4.)

By the end of the year 12,000 people had applied for membership. We now issued badges for a shilling. Correspondence began to pour in from all parts of the world. I received letters from lonely lighthouse-keepers, from lumbermen in British Columbia, from planters in Assam, from British-born employees in the United States. I was evidently right in my belief as to the need for a new organisation to keep the citizens of the Empire together. Every evening I took home a despatch-case full of these Overseas letters. After dinner I used to read out to my cousin human extracts. These letters made the Empire live.

At last I had found my niche in the scheme of things. The building up of a new movement of Empire service would require all my organising experience. But, as my mail-bag began to grow from week to week, I decided that I must be careful not to let my Amalgamated Press work suffer. I put my Overseas Club correspondence aside till the evenings, taking it home with me and making notes on the letters as I read them in my armchair after dinner. The Empire became even more of a reality to me than it had been. It was no dry as dust affair, but a living organism made up of living human beings, of stock-riders and store-keepers like those with whom I was corresponding.

"Lunch with the Chief on Friday—a three hours' talk to him afterwards. He is increasingly interested in 'Overseas Club.' Three times he repeated 'it is an extremely happy idea,' which is a lot for him. He quite thinks that it will be a gigantic world movement." (*Letter home*, Dec. 4, 1910.)

In starting the Overseas League, while I was editor of the *Overseas Daily Mail*, I was sowing seeds of future trouble. I was thinking solely of the welfare of the Empire—how best to provide a machine that would further Empire interests in every direction. I never for a moment thought that the new movement might have a dual purpose, that of serving the Empire, but also that of getting circulation

for the Overseas *Daily Mail*. I was quite willing for Northcliffe and the *Daily Mail* to get indirect prestige as backers of the new scheme. But the Overseas Club was something sacred to me: it was my religion—it must be absolutely and utterly above reproach.

Northcliffe had once said to me that in his huge organisation there was "one and practically only one uncertain factor—the human factor. You never know what any individual may do. Human beings do such surprising things." During the next eighteen months I often thought of his remarks. Who, ten years before, would have thought that ambitious Evelyn Wrench, now with the ball at his feet, would suddenly lose all interest in his work, just when it was bringing him a very large income, and become engrossed, to the exclusion of all else, in an idealistic movement!

When people in the office talked about the Overseas Club as a "circulation stunt" I writhed. I vowed it would be no such thing. This was the rift between Northcliffe and me. Looking at the matter, after all these years, I can quite appreciate his standpoint. He considered that he and the *Daily Mail* largely ran the country. He thought the best thing that could happen to Great Britain was to increase the power and influence of the *Daily Mail*. He did not understand that the welfare of the country and of the *Daily Mail* were not necessarily identical. Not that I wish to minimise any of the paper's patriotic efforts and achievements.

I quite realise now that I must have been a disappointment to him. He had lavished kindnesses on me; for these six years, or certainly for five years, he had been my hero. Now no man likes ceasing to be a hero to someone he has been very fond of. From 1909 my views about Northcliffe were changing; at first the change was unconscious and imperceptible. By 1911 I clearly saw his faults; I had largely lost interest in the career he had mapped out for me. Frankly, he puzzled me. I could not understand how he could be satisfied frequently to consecrate that brilliant brain and arresting personality to trivial ends. Perhaps he would just have been talking about some big

Imperial project and the next moment he would switch over to discussing some stunt for one of his periodicals. No doubt he was merely using his wonderful powers of concentration. But how could he concentrate his entire being on the "passing show"? I still admired many things about him. I recalled gratefully all his kindnesses to me, but I wished with everything in me that he was a little different. With that brain, that power of concentration, what might he not have achieved? There was something lacking, and, as the years passed, I became more conscious of the fact.

Sir Harold Harmsworth invited me to spend a week with him at Monte Carlo. At the end of March, 1911, I went out to the South of France with him and stayed as his guest at the Riviera Palace Hotel. One could not have had a more considerate host. It was not a case of an employee staying with his boss. It was friend staying with friend. I much enjoyed the week. I thought how glad I was that I was living in 1911, and not in 1904 during a previous visit at the time of the postcard worries—the memory of that nightmare experience was getting dim. From Monte Carlo I went to stay with the Rodds* at the British Embassy at Porta Pia, Rome, for several weeks, stopping on my way at Florence and Siena.

During the Easter week-end Sir Rennell took several of the house-party to Perugia and Assisi. Sir Rennell was a wonderful guide. Italy was in his soul. We stayed at the Brufani at Perugia. Watching the sunsets over the plains of Umbria with the Italian hill-towns in the background was intoxicating. On Easter morning we woke up to the pealing of church bells on a perfect spring day and drove across the plain in the cool of the morning to Assisi. I wanted to visit Assisi more than any other town in Europe since I had read Paul Sabatier's *St. Francis*. Assisi more than came up to my expectations. I left our two-horse victoria at the foot of the hill and climbed

* Lord and Lady Rennell. Sir Rennell Rodd was then British Ambassador at Rome.

up by short-cuts through fields of cyclamen. What a shrine for a Saint!—I would have liked to stay a month, to saturate myself in the Franciscan story on the spot. St. Francis's personality cast a spell over me. The joyous Saint! Every peal of church bells that Easter Day spoke of his love for Brother Man and Brother Bird.

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I returned to one of the most brilliant seasons London has ever had. The preparations for the Coronation festivities were in full swing. It was a good year to take leave of London Society. There was a crescendo of gaiety in May and June.

"Have received my definite appointment as Gold Stick Officer for the Coronation." (*Diary*, May 10, 1911.)

"The Stafford House Ball was the most wonderful ball I have ever seen in London. The German Crown Prince and Princess were there and everybody stayed till 4.0." (*Diary*, June 19, 1911.)

Two or three mornings a week I used to ride in the Park. I much enjoyed these morning rides and wrote to my parents: "I think I shall ultimately keep a hack in London"—an ambition that was never realised.

"On June 20 I played golf with the Chief and in the afternoon had another rehearsal of Gold Sticks in the Abbey for June 22. In the evening all the members of our Quadrille dined with Lady Northcliffe and we went on afterwards to the Shakespeare Ball. It was a perfectly wonderful sight and all went without a hitch. My part was Proteus in 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona'—my dress was very effective. I had the most wonderful Venetian red cloak." (*Letter home*.)

"The Coronation ceremony was really a wonderful sight. I saw everything perfectly and I had one of the best places in the Abbey. I stood exactly behind the Prince of Wales. I was instructed not to permit any of the Peers to move till a certain signal was given!" (*Diary*, June 22, 1911.)

Despite my absorption in the Overseas Club I still tried to meet as many people as possible in different *milieux*.

"On Wednesday I lunched with Oliver Locker-Lampson, who is in the House. There were also there Sir Max Aitken,* the Canadian Conservative M.P., Winston Churchill, Eddie Marsh (Winston's private secretary) and Gwynne, editor of the *Morning Post*. I was very glad to have a quiet talk with Winston again. I have the greatest opinion of his abilities, and I am quite certain we could not have a better man at the Admiralty. He told me that Germany is almost sure to increase her naval estimates and that our reply will be to issue a shipbuilding loan. He said he would sooner have his present job than any other in the Empire." (*Letter home*.)

My Empire work was introducing me to fresh friends. The previous year I met Philip Kerr.† "He is an interesting young man of twenty-eight who worked under Milner in South Africa, and belongs to a group of Imperialists who want to plan a workable Constitution for the Empire. Splendid work, and is very significant of the times." (*Diary*, Sept. 24, 1910.)

"Dined with Philip Kerr and his friend Brand. . . . I told them all about the Overseas Club and we talked Imperialism. It is splendid to think that there are young men like Kerr devoting themselves to the Empire." (*Diary*, Oct. 5, 1910.)

For the next year two opposing forces fought for mastery in me. On the one side, Mr. Worldly-Wiseman—on the other, love of Empire.

I knew that daily drudgery had to be done, that periodicals must be published, but I also knew myself, and I knew that unless my heart and soul were in my job I could not work. I felt like an opera in which there were two *motifs*: at one moment the call of the Empire would come crashing out, ending in a crescendo, everything seemed crystal clear—my course was obvious. Next day the Empire *motif* would fade away and its place be taken by worldly wisdom.

* Subsequently Lord Beaverbrook.

† Now Marquess of Lothian.

Northcliffe had definitely made up his mind what he wanted me to do. I was to succeed Hamilton Edwards as editor-in-chief of twenty-odd publications. A year previously he had revealed his plans for my future. He repeated them. "Motored up with the Chief from Sutton Place and had two hours' talk with him. He said I could quite easily edit all the Amalgamated Press periodicals and that he wished me to study them more closely than ever before. Funnily enough, this prospect arouses no enthusiasm in me." (*Diary*, Jan. 23, 1911.)

"Spent the morning quietly reading the Amalgamated Press Publications: *Answers*, *Home Chat*, *Forget-me-not*, *Girl's Friend*, *Boys' Companion*, *Sunday Circle*, *Chips*, and so on right down the list in accordance with the Chief's wishes. I feel absolutely out of sympathy with them, and have no desire to edit them. Though, for the moment, I think it my duty to do as he wishes. How I wish I could devote myself entirely to the Overseas Club." (*Diary*, Jan. 27, 1911.)

The next day there was good news:

"Just had splendid cable from Lord Grey saying that I may put him down as President of the Grand Council of the Canadian section of the Overseas Club. It does make me very happy. I am going to ask him to write the preface to the Overseas Club handbook." (*Diary*, Jan. 28, 1911.)

"At Elmwood* all day with the Chief discussing the pushing of paper patterns.

"The Chief has actually taken up golf and is getting quite a fair player. He is having links made at Sutton Place." (*Diary*, Feb. 8, 1911.)

"Overseas Club is making wonderful progress. I feel quite certain that sooner or later I shall have to devote my whole time to it. I am quite prepared to sacrifice financial prospects to it." (*Diary*, Feb. 25, 1911.)

"Saw the Chief for a short time. He has not really caught on to the Overseas Club idea. At one moment he says, 'You must study the Salvation Army methods'; at the next, when I suggest doing something for the

* Northcliffe's home at St. Peter's, Thanet.

members when they come home for the Coronation to make them feel welcome in the old country, he says, 'You must be careful not to chase butterflies.' " (*Diary*, March 16,

"Golf with the Chief all day." (*Diary*, May 3, 1911.)

"Down to New Brighton, opposite Liverpool, for one of our seaside schemes. How all this work bores me. If only I could devote myself entirely to the Overseas Club." (*Diary*, July 13, 1911.)

"I have been thinking a good deal about the future and do so wonder how long it will be before I have an open discussion with the Chief, and tell him definitely that I mean to devote my life to the Overseas Club and Imperial problems. It can only be a question of time now." (*Diary*, August 14, 1911.)

"Had a delightful talk with Hylda* after dinner and definitely made up my mind to devote myself to Overseas Club and to see Sir Harold to-morrow. I am so glad I have done so to-day, for as it happens it is Tuesday, my lucky day." (*Diary*, Nov. 21, 1911.)

"I went over to see Sir Harold as soon as he arrived and I told him that for over a year I had been thinking over my position. That I wanted to devote my life to the Empire. That if he could arrange it, I would like just to continue to look after the Export Department and the Overseas *Daily Mail*—that is the Overseas part of the two businesses. He was much surprised.

"*He could not have been nicer* and said he would gladly give me six months' leave of absence in which I could go to Australia for the Amalgamated Press, doing my Overseas Club work at the same time and coming back by Canada. He told me not to be too visionary, that I would find my position awaiting me on my return. I dined with him in the evening and he promised me £100 for the Overseas Club. (Needless to say I am delighted and I only hope the Chief won't upset my plans.)" (*Diary*, Nov. 22, 1911.)

"The Chief told me on the telephone he was going to make me a Director of the Amalgamated Press. The prospect leaves me curiously cold." (*Diary*, Dec. 5, 1911.)

* My cousin, Lady des Voeux.

"The Chief again talked to me about the directorship and said it was a well-deserved honour." (*Diary*, Dec. 13th, 1911.)

Two years before I would have given all I possessed to be a Director of the Amalgamated Press. Now that the reward was offered to me I did not want it. The once coveted fruit had turned to ashes. Again and again I pondered on the inscrutability of human beings. They do such unexpected things, just as Northcliffe had often said. For six years I had developed along definite lines in his business; his belief in me had been justified. What I had got I had achieved by hard work and by showing results. None of my rivals in the business could say there had been any favouritism. If Northcliffe counted on my future development along the lines he had laid down for me, he was quite justified in view of my past career.

How could he foresee that a spiritual upheaval would take place in me and that all my values would be changed—that I no longer sought business success and riches? Hitherto I had always loyally assented to all his plans for the future. Now I had plans of my own and they were going in an opposite direction. My metamorphosis must have wounded him. From his standpoint, despite his enthusiasm for the Empire, I was "chasing butterflies." Empire enthusiasm was all very well, but it must be kept within bounds.

The red-letter day for me in 1911 was Tuesday—June 27th, when I organised the first meeting of the members of the Overseas Club who were in London for the Coronation. As I took the chair on the platform at that first meeting of 300 Overseas Club members, waves of feeling swept over me. Presiding over a gathering like this was life at last, real life. In that audience of interested upturned faces, I had a vision of what the Overseas League has now become. I saw myself crusading round the Empire in the cause of Imperial unity. A high note of Imperial fervour pervaded the audience. It was a delightful audience to speak to—I felt that I could go on talking Empire for ever. Sixty-two parts of the Empire were represented. Among the

Kimberley, the Oudtshoorn Volunteers, the Barbados Volunteers, Britons from Teheran, Dawson City in the Yukon, Valparaiso and St. Petersburg. Members of a far-flung Imperial family. On the platform were Northcliffe, Mr. L. S. Amery, the Premier of Alberta, the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, my father, Sir Harry Brittain and many other Imperialists. "The meeting was a tremendous success. One of the most wonderful days I have ever spent. It makes me simply long to be off on my Empire tour . . . They were all very nice about my remarks. Tom Marlowe* said: 'Wrench, you were a revelation to me.'" (*Diary*, June 27, 1911.) "The meeting really went off much better than I expected and I was not a bit nervous at the time, though just before lunch I was afraid I was going to be. I took F. A. Mackenzie with me at 12.30 o'clock and rehearsed my speech to him in solitary state at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, as I wanted to be sure I knew it. When the time came I hardly looked at my notes at all." (*Letter home*.)

From now on I began to count the days till the moment when I could set off on my Crusade round the Empire. I knew I had a message to give—a message of Empire Unity—the message to which my first audience had responded. I was convinced that audiences overseas would be equally responsive. I could not do my office work. How could I concentrate on pushing the sales of popular weeklies when I felt the future of the Empire was at stake?

* For many years editor of the *Daily Mail*.

CHAPTER XXI

BURNING MY BOATS

THE year 1912 started on a sad note as I left my cousins' house in January and set up housekeeping on my own. "I said good-bye to Hylda and Freddy just after breakfast yesterday morning and then walked round here (30, Lower Belgrave Street). I hated saying goodbye to Hylda and no words of mine can ever express all that I feel about her. Just think, it is four years since I went there, and I consider it a real privilege to have lived under the same roof with her for so long. I can quite truthfully say that they have been the happiest four years of my life," I wrote to my parents.

I took the lease of No. 30, Lower Belgrave Street in 1911, during one of the periods when worldly wisdom was in the ascendant, and when I was hoping to continue my work at the Amalgamated Press. But I was reckoning without my destiny. I spent nearly £1,700 on doing up and furnishing my house, to live in it for only four months. When I returned from my Empire Crusade, I was no longer able to afford it.

During the first four months of 1912 I went through black days. I made up my mind a hundred times to give up my job and then I hearkened to the voice of "common-sense." But my mind was really made up in September 1910, when the first batch of letters from members of the Overseas Club arrived. The two "me's" argued with each other. The Empire me was winning all down the line, and then the "Commonsense" me would make a counter-attack. Perhaps my friends were right when they warned me "not to be too visionary." Having one's own house in Belgravia was pleasant. I had an excellent cook, I gave nice little dinners. Northcliffe came to dine and congratulated me on my cuisine. There was no doubt

about it—a poor man could never run a successful movement, and appearance counted for a lot. People would pay much more attention to “my message” if I was a successful business man, one of the leading lights in Northcliffe’s constellation. Then would follow three or four days of black depression. “Have been looking through old letters and diaries. My life seems so futile and I have failed so miserably compared to what I might have done. God help me and grant that I may make the most of what is left.* I feel I must soon come to a definite decision about the Overseas Club.” (*Diary*.)

Apparently by January 10 my mind was made up. “Ordered clothes for my Australian trip” was the entry in my diary. A week later I was lunching with Norman Angell. He, too, had been going through a period of doubt. We discussed his future plans. “He has definitely made up his mind to devote himself to ‘Great Illusion’ work.” (*Diary*, Jan. 20.) In February my father came to stay with me at Lower Belgrave Street. “E. and I had a long talk before and after dinner. Of course, he feels never being able to discuss Overseas matters in the office. They seem all preoccupied with a much lower game . . . He says apart from his secretary, Miss Hansard, the Overseas Club is never mentioned at the office, and I know he feels this very much.” (*My father’s letter to my mother*.)

February 15.

“Sir Harold Harmsworth said he would sooner that I did not go to Australia.”

February 18.

“Breakfast with Lord Grey after a sleepless night. I was miserable and felt terribly depressed all round. Of course, I can’t help feeling dreadfully disappointed about the trip, as when one has been looking forward to a thing tremendously, it takes some little time to get one’s mind adjusted to altered circumstances. On Monday night I went to the Agenda Club dinner. David, headmaster of Rugby, spoke perfectly splendidly on the young men of the day and their opportunity.”

* The situation was not quite as serious as it seemed to me, considering I was only 29 at the time!

February 23.

"Lunch with Phil.* I told him that I had practically made up my mind to speak to the Chief about the Overseas Club and that I wished to devote my life to Empire work. I actually wrote a letter to the Chief, telling him that I wanted to see him, but I did not post it, as I thought I would wait a little longer before actually taking the step."

February 26.

"Talked to John Buchan at dinner. He was very sympathetic about Overseas Club idea."

March 6.

"Harry Brittain came in to see me during the afternoon. He is one of the few people who has really caught on to the Overseas Club idea. He spoke up like a man and said that someone *must* go round the Empire to organise it and that I was that someone. My talk with him merely confirmed me in my decision."

March 7.

"Went to hear Dr. Mott of the Student Christian Movement. Most interesting. He is a great organiser. I wonder if I will ever get as fluent and lucid a speaker as he is. Of course, he has had wonderful practice—sixteen years travelling and speaking."

March 10.

"Such a splendid sermon by Dr. Geikie Cobb at St. Ethelburga's. He said 'One must take the path of self sacrifice when the problem comes to one in life' . . . I drafted letters to the Chief and Sir Harold . . . I have been much happier since my mind has been made up."

March 17.

"Feeling very depressed about my future and the Overseas Club. I don't see my way."

March 24.

"Funnily enough last Tuesday, after I had just written my letter to the Chief and was going to send it, I got one from him saying he would probably have some special work for me to do in connection with the editorial side of the Amalgamated Press. It is the job of supervising all the papers that Hamilton Edwards has looked after, and

* My old friend, Philip Agnew, of *Punch*.

about which he has spoken to me at intervals for the last two years. I just wrote and told him I was not quite happy about my work."

This was the letter I got from Northcliffe, written from the South of France :

"I told you to look out for a storm in the teacup* and to study certain papers closely. Hope you are doing so.

"Golf here not up to English courses. I did the 9 at Monte Carlo (altitude 3,500 feet) in 39 and the 18 at Nice in a very fluky 89. But the glare is impossible for weak eyes.

"Buck up, my dear Evelyn."

I replied to Northcliffe's letter as follows :

March 19th, 1912.

"MY DEAR CHIEF,

"Thank you very much for your letter and for taking me into your confidence.

"I have been rather worried for some time about my work. Might I see you for an hour quietly before you return to the office, as I want to tell you exactly how matters stand ? "

"EVELYN."

More days of depression. The Chief was evidently still thinking that he could make me into a kind of super-editor of all the Amalgamated Press. What a pity he could not look into my mind. If only he could, he would see he was asking the impossible of me. As far as pushing sales of the papers or of editing them, I was like a blown out candle. At first it had burned brightly. Then it had flickered. Now the wick was burnt out. There were some things I could force myself to do by the exercise of will power. To become enthusiastic over the sales of our papers was not one. Without conviction in the worthwhile nature of my job, I could not work.

My mind was now finally made up.

April 10.

"Talk to Sir H. about the Overseas Club and that I must go for my Empire trip."

April 11.

"Went to the House of Commons to hear Asquith

* This referred to the firm's parting with Mr. Hamilton Edwards.

introduce his Home Rule Bill. I must say on the face of it I felt very sympathetic."

April 20.

"Went to Imperial Institute. It is quite dead. So much might be done with it."

April 22.

"Talk to Sir Harold about my feelings. Repeated to him what I said in November last. Told him that my heart was not in the business and that I felt I must go round the Empire."

April 24.

"Saw Sir Harold for a minute. He was quite sympathetic and told me to come to breakfast to-morrow."

April 25.

"Breakfast with Sir Harold at Claridge's and he told me that one of his sons said quite frankly that he was unable to read our periodicals. He told me he would give me a 3 years agreement as 'Manager' of the export department at £1,000 a year . . . Felt much happier with this load off my mind. Decided to write to the Chief."

In return for my cancelling my agreement, I would, therefore, receive nearly a year's income, as far as the Amalgamated Press was concerned, spread over three years, without any obligation to attend at the office. It meant that I could now devote myself to the Empire for the next few years.

April 28.

"I feel much relieved now that I have taken the bull by the horns. On Thursday I breakfasted with Sir Harold and he could not have been more friendly."

A few days later I received this letter:

7th May, 1912.

"MY DEAR EVELYN,

"In regard to the official business letter I sent you to-day, I wish to place on record the fact that the alteration in your responsibilities and position has been made entirely at your own request, in order to enable you to look after the work associated with the Overseas Club.

"Yours very faithfully,

"(signed) HAROLD HARMSWORTH."

"EVELYN WRENCH, ESQ."

April 28.

"Posted my letter to the Chief about my future position. I do wonder what he will say. I told him quite definitely (1) that I feel that the moment has come as far as the Overseas Club is concerned for greater activity and for someone to visit the branches, (2) that I am unable to take any interest in the editorial side of the Amalgamated Press publications, (3) that I feel I am not working as I should like to, owing to the Overseas Club." (*Diary*.)

April 30.

"Had a very nice letter from the Chief, saying among other things, 'You will be a director of the Company as soon as I can make you one.' I still feel that he does not realise that my heart is absolutely in the Overseas Club work . . . Went down to Folkestone where I met the Chief on the incoming boat at 9.0 p.m. and motored with him to Elmwood. The Channel did look lovely by moonlight. The Chief was most friendly."

May 1.


"Motored up to London with the Chief—taking three hours. I told him exactly how the land lay and that I had the Overseas Club so much on my mind that I could not do justice to my other work. He said 'All this is due to your not having done as I told you to, over a year ago—you should have got a man to run the Overseas Club—it is all a question of a man.' But, of course, I feel I am the man. He gave me £250 towards the Overseas Club debt of £2,000. I don't think this is very generous. He does not really enter into the spirit of the thing, so I shall have to fight a lonely battle." (*Diary*.)

This comment on Northcliffe's first donation of £250 to the Overseas Club funds sounds ungrateful. Building up the organisation had already involved an excess of expenditure over revenue of £2,000. Originally, when I had unfolded my scheme, Northcliffe had seemed really keen and I had hoped that he, as President of the new movement, would back it through thick and thin. I now realised that to him the Overseas Club was only a side-show. He did not understand that it was a "religion" to me. I saw in a flash that the financial responsibilities would fall

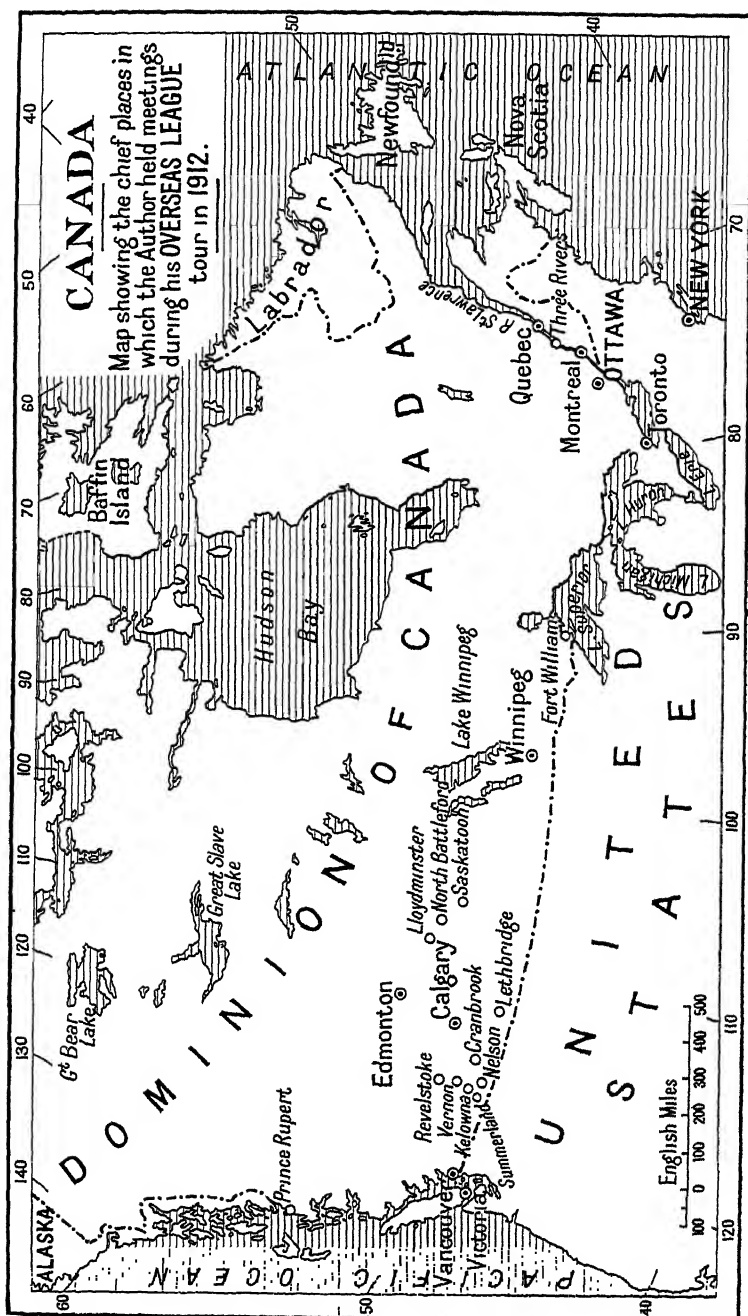
on my shoulders, that I would have to set about collecting money.

I want to sum up my eight years with Northcliffe fairly. He had been a generous friend and very appreciative chief. I had gone from success to success. Nearly all the suggestions I had made had been adopted. The misfortune in our relations was that he built his plans for the future on the Evelyn Wrench of 1909, his enthusiastic admirer and the ambitious young man whose only desire was to push the firm's wares. He reckoned without the human factor, despite his great knowledge of human nature. He could not have foreseen my changed outlook. To him my changed values must have seemed incomprehensible. The bulk of his fortune came from these publications which I appeared to despise.

It was not that I despised them in reality. Many of them were most estimable. A psychic upheaval had taken place in me. There had been "new birth." My life became regulated by a new scale of values; however much I tried to work with my previous enthusiasm I could not do so. When the Overseas Club was started I found my vocation. I plunged into Empire organisation. For months I had hesitated. At first I had pushed the thought of ploughing a lonely furrow aside. It would have been so much easier to keep my position and find a man to run the Overseas Club as Northcliffe suggested. Alas, in great decisions in life, you cannot make the best of both worlds. If the Overseas Club was to be a force, I must be ready for any sacrifice.



AN EMPIRE CRUSADE
1912—1913



CANADA

Map showing the chief places in which the Author held meetings during his OVERSEAS LEAGUE tour in 1912.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CRUSADE BEGINS—

CANADA, NEW ZEALAND AND THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDS

I SAILED from Liverpool on the *Mauretania* in May, 1912, accompanied by my sister Winifride, a stimulating and delightful companion. England looked its best as we sped to Liverpool. The woods were carpeted with bluebells and the may was in full bloom, a joyous memory of the old country to take with us. The first meeting of the tour was held at the initiative of the crew of the *Mauretania* the evening before we reached New York.

The meeting took place in the third-class dining-room, which was decked with Union Jacks. It was fitting that the first meeting of an Empire Crusade should be held on the high seas, under the Red Ensign on the *Mauretania* the fastest ship afloat. Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, an old friend, took the chair. Great enthusiasm was displayed for the Imperial cause; the proceedings ended with the "*Mauretania* whisper," a resounding round of cheers. This was the first meeting I had ever addressed at sea. The romantic nature of my mission came home to me. It was a long time before I fell asleep; I kept seeing those intent faces, hearing the applause. My previous life seemed very humdrum.

In our ten-week trip I addressed thirty-five public meetings in Canada, from Quebec to Prince Rupert on the Pacific. Two days after our arrival we had a large meeting of the New York branch. Britons under a foreign flag proved an excellent recruiting ground. The day after the meeting my sister received this letter from an Englishman in New York: "Will you please tell Mr. Wrench I am glad he explained about the Overseas *Daily Mail* and its connection with the League, because I, too, have heard people say that the League is only a newspaper-selling

scheme. We, who know your brother, knew, of course, that that could never be true." At the very commencement of the tour, what I had foreseen had happened. My mission had been misunderstood. This misrepresentation of our aims was difficult to overcome. The impression that I was sent round the Empire by Northcliffe was prevalent not only in Canada, but also in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. I knew that the Overseas League would fail if the view that it was a newspaper scheme received general acceptance.

The trip was an excellent apprenticeship for a public speaker, for the meetings were held in very varied circumstances. They included banquets, lectures in public halls and private houses, and out-of-door gatherings by lakeside and on the prairie. I learned how much audiences can differ and how much the speaker depends on the inspiration derived from his hearers. Some days remarks which had previously met with approval would fall flat. There was more in speaking than I had thought. Sometimes I could have spoken for ever, at other times speaking was an effort and the sources of inspiration dried up.

At an Empire Day dinner at Ottawa in 1912, when I had to respond for the guests, I experienced failure—mortifying, but salutary. Three Cabinet Ministers were present, including the veteran Imperialist, Sir George Foster, Minister of Trade and Commerce. I was nervous. The knowledge that this renowned orator was to follow me made me self-conscious. Shortly after I began to unfold my vision of Empire, an elderly gentleman just opposite me dropped asleep. My enthusiasm ebbed away. With difficulty I made myself get through my fifteen-minute speech. I sat down exhausted. Once my ordeal was over I was able to admire the polished address of Sir George Foster. Sir George had told my sister that he did not know what he would take for his theme when he stood up. I envied such mastery of the speaker's art.

A propaganda tour holds many surprises. Centres which from a distance seemed promising were often

disappointing. Other centres, from which nothing was expected, provided some of our greatest triumphs.

The most successful meeting of the Canadian tour was held in the Industrial Hall, Winnipeg. The Lieutenant-Governor, the Mayor, Mr. Hugh McDonald, son of the "Father of Confederation," Sir John McDonald, were on the platform. There were crowds in the street and a bodyguard of soldiers were drawn up in honour of the Lieutenant-Governor. This was what I had been waiting for. Something spectacular. The hall was packed. I spoke for an hour—it seemed like ten minutes. I knew what popular preachers felt like. I wished I could spend my life crusading for causes.

One of the most difficult meetings I ever addressed was at Lethbridge, Alberta, in the garden of the chairman. I stood on a chair. There were constant interruptions. The attention of my audience was straying. Fork lightning was flashing across the sky and rumbling thunder heralded an oncoming storm. My host had four white Pomeranians and every now and then they would start to romp about and bark at their neighbours in the next garden. I was much relieved when the heavens opened and a deluge drove us into the house.

Lethbridge was a great success from the Overseas League standpoint, but my visit always remains a sad memory. It marked a new stage in my relationship with Northcliffe. Just before going to address the local Canadian Club, I received a cable from Northcliffe expressing surprise that I had not referred to him in my speeches as "founder and inventor of Overseas."

My worst fears were realised. My original article outlining the scheme had appeared in the *Overseas Daily Mail*, hence the widespread idea that it was a *Daily Mail* scheme. Before I went to Canada I consulted Lord Grey, and he urged the importance of making the position perfectly clear from the outset that the Overseas League was a non-party patriotic society, and was *not connected* with any journalistic enterprise, but in every speech I made I referred with gratitude to the help I had received from Northcliffe.

My experiences in the Prairie Provinces taught me that Canada was a human melting-pot. In a town where twenty-five nationalities were represented in the local school, the townsfolk seemed indifferent to the Empire. "Here in Western Canada there is tremendous need for the Overseas League—more than most people at home think. Unless strong measures are taken, Western Canada will be slowly but surely absorbed by the United States. Canadians in the East, who are always running over to the old country, have no idea as to the real condition of affairs." (*Letter to friend in England.*)

I thought that we must work through Nationalism to Internationalism. The first task out West was to create a living Canadian patriotism, to create a Canadian nation out of all these racial elements. I met a supporter of the Bahai movement who claimed that the brotherhood of man was the only cause worth advocating. He had no sympathy with my mission. I disagreed. First things first. Duty to one's home, one's town, one's country must be the first steps. Making a united Canadian nation within the Empire seemed to me in 1912 a big enough job for any movement to attempt.

Winnipeg was a good centre in which to start an investigation of Canadian racial origins. In the summer of 1912 1,000 to 1,500 immigrants from every part of Europe were daily passing through the Government Migration shed. I went to the railway station to see an immigration train arrive, containing 750 Galician peasants, in native costume. A few hours later they had been distributed among the Prairie Provinces. In those days the appetite of the Canadian West for human beings was insatiable.

The best way to understand Western Canada was to visit the farmers on their homesteads. Ten miles jolting across the prairie in a two-horse wagon. Keen morning air that seemed to sweep down from the North Pole. The prairie carpeted with spring flowers. An occasional homestead belonging to a Doukhobor or perhaps to an Icelander, then the prairie to ourselves except for the gophers. As we approached, they sat upon their hind legs, with their front paws against their sides. When we got

close, they scuttled down their holes. Then we would pass a Galician in his sheepskin in an ox-wagon, bringing in grain from "Big Deer" or "Old Moose" forty miles away.

On arrival at the homestead there was a warm welcome. We had dinner in the kitchen with the farmer, his family, Ettie, the "help," and Bob, the farm-hand, an Americanised Irishman. I was allowed to feed the pigs and chickens. Everyone was equal on the prairie, social position and inherited wealth counted for nothing. Could you do a job of work? Good for you. All hands were required till harvest time. For the first time in my life I caught a vision of the world that might be, a world in which all men would be equal, a world in which men and women would gain their living by the sweat of their brow, where there would be jobs for all. It was very stimulating.

After my third tour through Canada my Empire views began to change. Not that I loved it less, but I considered that Colonial nationalism as set forth in Richard Jebb's book was a fact to be reckoned with. It would never be possible to run the Empire from London. I recognised the strength of Canadian national sentiment. The greatness of an Empire should not be reckoned in square mileage and trade turnover. It was the "imponderables" that counted. The country in which lived the happiest human beings, where the laws were best observed, where the things of the spirit occupied their rightful place, was the "greatest" country, very different from my boyhood's conception. Carlyle and Ruskin helped me to a new outlook. *Fors Clavigera* affected me profoundly. Ruskin was the prophet I was in search of. He now occupied the place in my affections previously held by Cecil Rhodes. Imperialism must imply social service. So long as there was a slum in the cities of the Old World, so long as there was corruption in public life in the Empire, patriots must hang their heads in shame.

From Prince Rupert, British Columbia, we returned to Great Britain, sailing from New York on the *Mauretania*, where our 200 friends among the crew gave us a very warm welcome. After a couple of months' rest we set out for

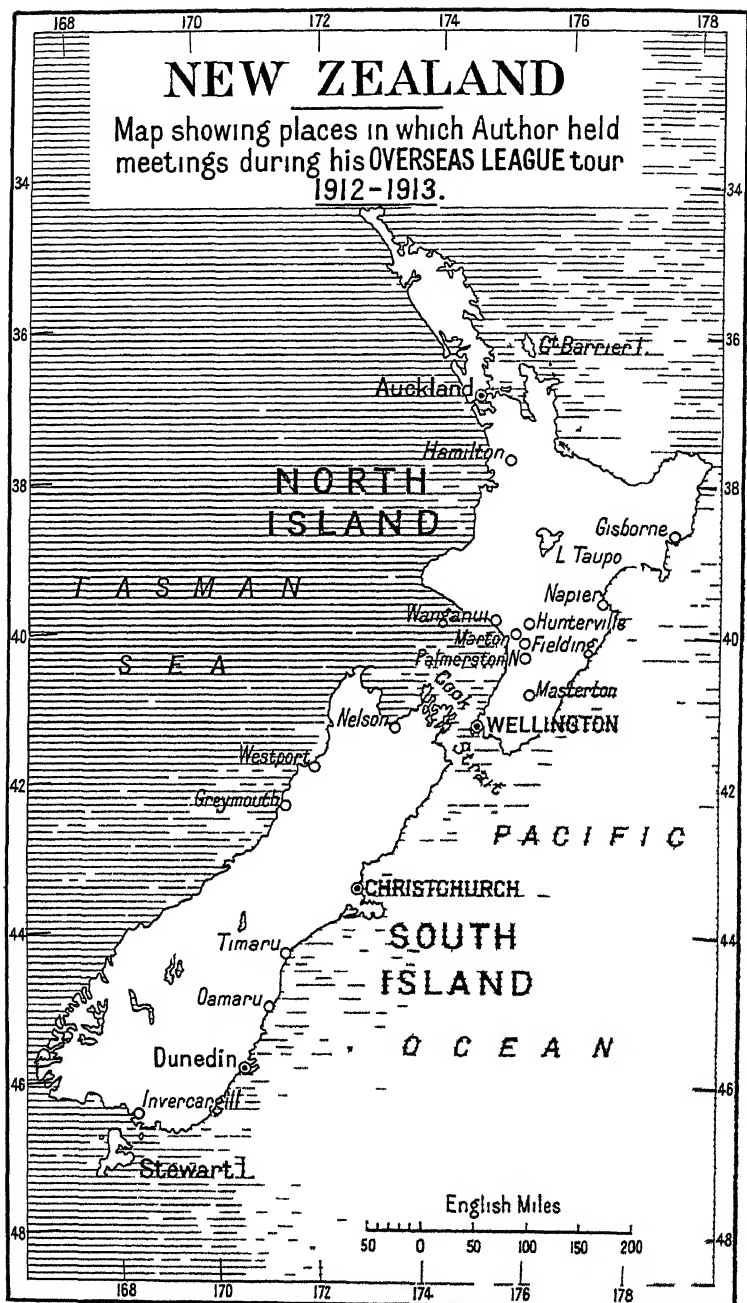
the second stage of the Overseas Empire Crusade on the *Osterley* of the Orient Line. We bade good-bye to Europe on a starlit night at Taranto, in Southern Italy, in October, 1912.

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During our wanderings we slept in 250 places. We were three months at sea, we visited five continents, we spent forty nights in the train. Sometimes I used to wake up wondering where I was. I would ask myself: Can I, E.W., really be here in Tonga Tabu, South Sea Islands, at Apia in Samoa, at Suva in Fiji, at Wagga-Wagga, N. S. Wales, at Livingstone, Rhodesia, or Stellenbosch, Cape Province? There was no doubt about it, I was very much there. Never again did any place on this globe seem inaccessible to me. My *wanderlust* was satisfied.

We passed through the Suez Canal at night. The ship steamed at a speed of six knots an hour. It seemed as if it were hardly moving. We glided along a narrow channel. On either side stretched the illimitable desert, yellow even in the light of the moon. We sat on deck most of the night, and the desert air, carrying the mystery of great solitudes, blew clean and pure in our faces. Through the gateway to Australasia our dream ship glided in the transparent blue and silver of an Eastern night, the first stage towards a new world.

What exactly was the object of my Empire Crusade? It was to visit the branches of the Overseas League that had sprung up since I wrote the article describing my proposed Empire Society. I wanted to unite these scattered centres. I wanted the Overseas League to be a kind of "Grown-up Boy Scouts," an organisation of human beings pledged to Empire service. The Empire was a living thing, not a mere political conception; it was the sum total of the human units that made it up. Each individual must feel that he was a link in the chain.



In the early hours of a lovely summer November morning the R.M.S. *Zealandia* drew alongside the wharf at Auckland. My hopes were keyed to a high pitch. I had been in correspondence with our New Zealand organiser for over a year. His letters were full of enthusiasm. He had made the complete arrangements for our tour. I was sure we were in good hands. There he was standing on the quay, wearing his Overseas badge.*

I almost tripped in running down the gangway with hand outstretched to meet him. As I got close to him, something went dead in me—I was chilled to the marrow. Instinctively I knew he was not the ideal organiser I had envisaged. Poor old man, he has passed on! R.I.P.

The wonderful tour, the great meetings which he was supposed to have arranged, were largely figments of his imagination. My hopes were dashed. Fiasco. A bad beginning. I had to start the laborious business of organising our speaking tour from Auckland to Invercargill *de novo*, without any past records or correspondence to guide me. This was the greatest disappointment of the tour. To run a successful movement you must have the right men. My task resolved itself therefore into trying to find the right man in each place. It took me forty-eight hours to get over that first disappointment. I hardly slept that night. I had a bad nightmare. I dreamt that a badger was springing at my throat!

The New Zealand tour started at Auckland with a Civic reception at the Town Hall. One Civic reception is much like another. It usually takes place in the morning. The visitor is ushered into the presence of the Mayor, the City Fathers and the Press. In the name of the citizens the Mayor welcomes the visitor, who is expected to make a suitable reply; at the conclusion of the ceremony ginger ale and sandwiches are provided or in some more emancipated districts whisky and soda are added.

It would be affectation to pretend that I was not gratified by the attention paid to us. The Overseas mission was

* A reproduction of the Overseas League badge appears on page 307.

receiving increasing publicity. In New Zealand we were even more in the limelight than in Canada. In Australia we had perhaps our greatest triumph.

"Last night's banquet to Mr. Allen, the New Zealand Minister of Defence, was a great success. It was on the eve of his going to England to discuss Naval Defence. I sat next to the Prime Minister, Mr. Massey. The latter proposed the toast of 'His Majesty's Dominions,' and I had to respond; it is the first occasion on which I have had to reply to a Prime Minister. I felt gratified." (*Letter*.) I took whatever Fate offered me with both hands as part of the day's work. If on Monday you addressed a large audience of several hundreds, probably on Tuesday at the next place there would be little enthusiasm.

From Wanganui, New Zealand, I wrote to my cousin: "Here is the diary of a typical week:

"Wednesday, December 4th. Hamilton, meeting and speech, left by midnight train.

"Thursday, 5th. Arrived at Marton 11 a.m., address of welcome and reply on station platform. Afternoon visit to boys' school, another speech. Meeting Town Hall evening, speech.

"Friday, 6th. Train to Hunterville, open-air fête on bowling green, great fun. Speech. Public meeting in the evening, speech.

"Saturday, 7th. Out by 9 a.m. for motor trip with local committee. By train to Marton and then by car up to a sheep station to see shearing all day. By train in evening to Wanganui, arrived 10 p.m.

"Sunday, 8th. Working all morning; with local secretary rest of day.

"Monday, 9th. Interviewing people all day. Visit to girls' college, 200, speech. Visit to the Eton of New Zealand, Wanganui Boys' College; address to them lasting half an hour. Public meeting in Council Chambers evening, speech.

"Last night after the three speeches I felt very weary, and began to wish that I had not to speak again to-night and to-morrow night."

My sister was a great help to me. Her charm and social

gifts won her numerous friends. By now she had become an accomplished public speaker. Women speakers from "home" were something of a novelty "down under" in 1912, and her remarks received rapt attention. She had just completed a course at the Sesame Training College in London with a view to taking up infant welfare on her return to England. New Zealand, on account of Sir Frederick Truby King's work, was the right place to study mothercraft.

We spent Christmas at beautiful Queenstown on Lake Wakatipu and then went on to Lake Te Anau. In three and a half days we walked seventy miles over the Milford Track. A walking tour among the lakes and fjords of the Southern Island is a delightful experience. The traveller is in a primeval land. I recall a vision of blue water and yet bluer mountains, of glistening white peaks and ruby coloured rata trees scattered like jewels over the green raiment of the hillside.

Once the tree line was left behind we were in a paradise for botanists, where mountain lilies of the purest white, with hearts of gold, and mountain asters grew. A curious phenomenon is the so-called "vegetable caterpillar," a creature half-plant, half-insect, which starts life as a grub in the caterpillar stage. It burrows down into the earth and turns into a fungus and sends a stalk up above the ground which looks like a small bulrush.

Greatly refreshed by our fortnight's holiday among the mountains, we recommenced our speaking tour at Invercargill, the second most southerly town in the British Empire. In a few days we were once more in the whirl, snowy mountain peaks and crimson rata blossoms were only a memory.

Nine months in Australia and New Zealand taught me to look at Great Britain through Dominion eyes. I saw the old land with its qualities and defects. The sea-girt isle "set in the silver sea," the cradle of our race, whence adventurers and missionaries had set out to the uttermost ends of the earth and planted our creed, our civilization, our customs and manner of life. An island where the torch of human liberty burned brightly, where the Mother

of Parliaments established a new epoch in human history. Runnymede, the shrine of English-speaking liberty, was part of my heritage. It was my fellow-countrymen who had built up the first British Empire, who had created the United States of America, a ninety per cent. British undertaking at the outset. It was my countrymen who had conquered "regions Cæsar never knew" and had created the modern British Empire, the greatest Commonwealth of Free Peoples the world had ever seen.

But, alas! there was another side to the picture—the sordid conditions under which great masses of the people lived in the old country. I would never have got my horror of slums had I stayed at home. On the great spaces of the Canadian Prairie, in fair towns under the Southern Cross, I saw our industrial civilization in its true light.

In New Zealand there was a high level of prosperity. The great contrasts between wealth and poverty in Great Britain struck you afresh. The poor physique of the British town-dweller seemed a menace to our civilization. When would the folk in the old country wake up to the slum menace? That was a thought which disturbed me every day I spent in the Dominions—it has never left me.

New Zealand in 1912-13 was a contented country. It seemed to have few problems. There was work for all. There were no great extremes in the social scale. Every citizen led a well-ordered existence. The majority of people had time to enjoy life as well as to make money. New Zealand is probably the most patriotic part of the British Empire. Stay-at-home Britons who take their views on Imperial matters from the post-prandial utterances of New Zealand ministers at Imperial functions in London are apt to be led astray as to conditions elsewhere in the Empire. New Zealand is the Ulster of the South Pacific, an isolated British community of a million and a half, which looks for the safeguarding of its culture to the Mother Country. I met only one man who openly declared himself a believer in Republican institutions. He subsequently repented of his views and became a Scout-master.

There is no colour prejudice. New Zealanders are proud of their Maori fellow-citizens, to have Maori blood

does not mean social ostracism. Sir James Carroll, the half-Irish Maori, who had acted as Prime Minister during Sir Joseph Ward's visit to England, was a very eloquent speaker. Many British politicians would have envied his choice of language. I met Maoris whose grandparents remembered the days before the British occupation in 1840. Past history is referred to good-humouredly and the early conflict between the Maoris and the British pioneers is frankly discussed. During my visit the Maori Minister, representing Maori interests in Parliament, in a speech referred to the gradual absorption of his race by the British. He concluded his remarks by saying: "In the past it was we who 'absorbed' you. Now you have turned the tables on us," a joke which was widely referred to in the Press. There seems to be no inclination to disguise their ancestors' fondness for human flesh.

Travelling in New Zealand twenty-two years ago was comparatively slow. Many centres could only be reached by steamer or stage coach. The motor had not yet swept all before it. One could still indulge in the "joys" of coaching. In fine weather travelling by stage was delightful, but in bad weather it was very unpleasant. I have a vivid recollection of dragging numbed limbs from the outside seat of the coach and trying to thaw during the half-hour interval at the rest house while the horses were changed.

"After the two days' coaching we were overjoyed when we got into a smooth and comfortable motor-coach to do the final thirty miles of the journey. The good old coaching days are all very well in retrospect, but I prefer the twentieth century." (*Letter.*)

Frequently in New Zealand, especially in the South Island, the landscape reminded the traveller of the Mother Country. The gardens were full of roses, sweet peas, geraniums, and white lilies; there were hedges of hawthorn, there were oaks and sycamores in the woods, daisies in the fields, larks soaring overhead. And just when it seemed impossible to remember that I was in a land over which the British flag had only flown for seventy years there would be ditches full of nasturtiums and arum

lilies, strange flowering shrubs and trees with fantastic shapes—I was indeed 12,000 miles from Big Ben.

The last two months in New Zealand were very strenuous. We ended with big meetings at Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland. The largest meeting we held was at the Gisborne Opera House, where we had an audience of 900. I was advance agent, impresario, lecturer and organiser rolled into one during the campaign. The rush was beginning to tell, and I longed for a breathing space. As a rest we went for a three weeks' cruise round some of the South Sea Islands, calling in at Tonga, Samoa and Fiji on our way to Australia.

Our first introduction to a South Sea island took place at Nukualofa, Tongatabu, in the Friendly Islands, a low-lying coral island which had been swept by a hurricane two weeks before. The coconut palms had been stripped of foliage and the Parliament House of the "Kingdom" was a mass of corrugated iron. The disaster was not as serious as it seemed at first sight, for Parliament only met every three years. The Mother of Parliaments might do well to follow suit!

At Nukualofa we sat round the kava bowl—a South Sea Island ceremony. Under our host's veranda a large circle of natives squatted. We joined the circle. A boy beat the kava root to a pulp and then strained it into the kava bowl through palm fibre. A Tongan love song was sung by boys with melodious voices. A coconut shell containing the precious liquid was passed round. It tasted like soapy water with a faint flavour of peppermint.

The local English doctor kindly provided us with a guide when we expressed a wish to explore the island. We subsequently discovered that George was no less a person than brother-in-law of the King. Despite his royal connections, George was not above carrying our belongings and assisting in the capture of rainbow-hued butterflies.

I met a beachcomber in one remote island, a familiar figure to the film-goer, a gaunt, sallow individual who had "gone native," a European with a University education. His undoing had been an unquenchable thirst. One of the chief events in his life was waiting for the

arrival of the steamer on her monthly round, a pathetic figure, he cadged drinks from the passengers while she was in port. There were no frigidaire in 1913, and iced drinks could only be obtained during the steamer's call.

Just as Rhodes' tomb in the Matoppos calls every visitor to South Africa, so in the South Seas the "Anglo-Saxon" makes his way to the tomb of Robert Louis Stevenson on Mount Vaea near Apia, Samoa.

S.S. *Atua*, between Samoa and Fiji.

"Yesterday afternoon we said good-bye to Samoa after three delightful days. I enjoyed our visit to Stevenson's tomb more than anything else on this whole trip. To get there one has to drive about four and a half miles from Apia through coconut groves, plantations of breadfruit trees, paw-paws, bananas and kava, and native villages to Vailima. A little turning off the main road takes one up to Vailima, which is now enlarged and is used as the residence of the German Governor. One goes along a little grassy path with the notice, *Nach Stevensons Grab*. In a few minutes we came to a clear stream, coming down from the mountains, in which a scantily-clad native woman was washing clothes.

"We crossed the stream and then had a stiff climb for forty minutes through the tropic forest. We tried to follow the overgrown track up which 100 natives dragged 'Tusitala's' coffin in 1894. It was very hot and I was wringing wet. I went on in advance as I wanted to arrive at R.L.S.'s tomb in silence. It is a *wonderful* spot. Just a little clearing in the forest on the top of the mountain sufficient to enable one to look down on to Apia Bay and the coral reef which guards the entrance to the harbour. Then the blue Pacific stretches as far as you can see. One almost hears the surf breaking over the reef far, far below.

"Flaming red hibiscus swayed in the breeze over Stevenson's tomb. There was absolute silence save for the swallows—which flitted to and fro in the sunlight. I like to think of them as guardian angels watching his resting-

place. A wonderful Valhalla, with the tropic forest for wall and the sky for ceiling." (*Letter.*)

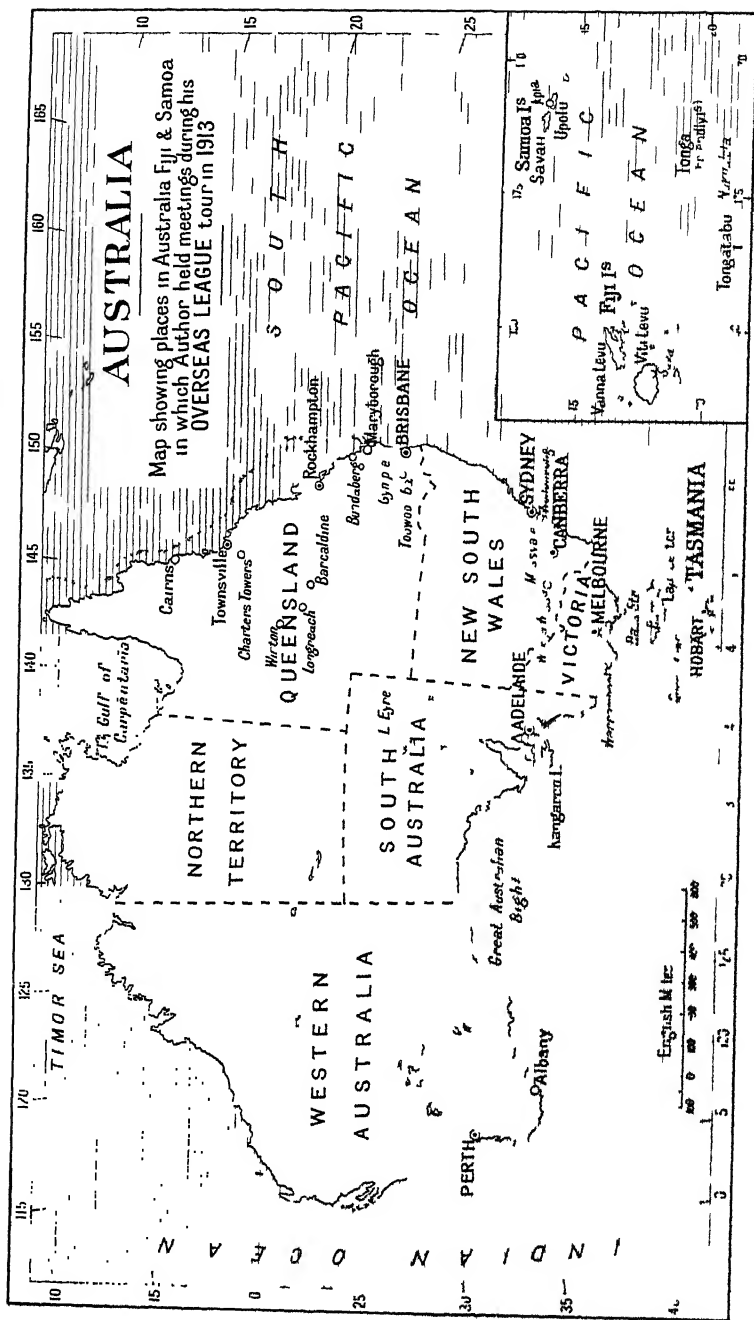
The tomb is a plain sarcophagus. On one end was chiselled a thistle, on the other an hibiscus. On one side was carved the well-known lines :—

"Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.
This be the verse you grave for me,
Here he lies where he longed to be ;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill."

"I was sorry to say good-bye to Apia. We bathed in an enchanting pool on the Papaloloa road on our last evening. The natives wore garlands of flowers. Our driver, stripped to the waist, wore a simple lava-lava and his copper coloured skin contrasted with the green leaf circlet round his head. In the tropic dusk we returned to the landing stage. The air was soft and balmy, heavy with the scent of exotic plants. Flying-foxes were flitting among the palms and the honey-suckers were calling to each other in clear, bell-like tones." (*My sister's diary.*)

"To-morrow we are due at Sydney. I have been wondering a good deal how our Australian visit will turn out. It is such an unknown quantity. New Zealand was so successful that one hardly dare hope that Australia will be equally so. I like one's wanderings being divided into separate chapters like this.

"I suppose because it is at sea and I have time to think, I have several times lately been wondering what my future work will be when I get back to England. I cannot help feeling that the way will be shown to me, that somehow I shall be able to use all the experience I have gained directly in connection with the Empire. I feel very grateful for all this time at sea because it does enable one to look down on one's ordinary life from above." (*Letter.*)



CHAPTER XXIII

AN ISLAND CONTINENT

AUSTRALIA seemed a big problem. There was something alarming in starting a crusade throughout an entire continent! Canada had seemed a large enough undertaking—but an unknown continent, one of the world's five sub-divisions, was another matter. It was with foreboding that I stepped ashore from the s.s. *Atua* at Sydney, which had been our home for three weeks. My fears were realised—once more the Overseas Crusade made a bad beginning. The existing committee was useless. I had to start from zero. I was very depressed. Why need the task of organising be hedged in with so many difficulties? Sydney gave us a chilly welcome. The city was packed for the Annual Show, the hotels were crowded.

"The work in Australia is a little more difficult than in New Zealand, the Overseas League is not well known here; in Canada and New Zealand Lord Grey and Lord Islington respectively, both took it up and talked about it. But here it has just had to make its way without influential friends and I have to do a great deal of spade work. I enjoy the difficulties, but sometimes I wish I had not to spend so much time starting from the beginning all over again." (*Letter.*)

Travelling for months on end and meeting fresh human beings every few days taught me to be quick at summing-up people. Almost by instinct I could divide the people I met into two classes—the altruists, who really joined the cause for the cause's sake, and the self-seekers, axe-grinders, social climbers and notoriety-hunters. One of the hardest lessons to learn was patience, not to show your disappointment when you found that the aims of the society had been misunderstood. I writhed inwardly when some local patriot got up on the platform and preached a Jingo "Imperialism" entirely different from the

doctrine I believed in. How were you to pass on your vision? That was one of the chief problems. And how ensure that the enthusiasm generated at a meeting would not evaporate?

As a rule depression came from overwork or continual travelling. But sometimes it came from disappointment in one's fellows and lack of confidence in one's self. The load seemed too heavy. Why had I started the long uphill climb? Why need I have been dissatisfied with my London office life just when everything was going swimmingly? How could I have been stupid enough to think that my individual efforts were going to have any effect? A human ant assuming that he could deliberately influence the thinking of his fellow-citizens in five continents. It was absurd. Empire unity and Empire co-operation would come irrespective of me. There were too many busybodies about, let each man stick to his job and enjoy the good things of life and not worry about crusading. Still, I could not help the urge in me. It was stronger than myself.

Within three weeks I had shaken off my depression and entirely revised my feelings about Australia. I grew to love it, to love its great spaces, its warm-hearted people, its democratic institutions, its freedom, its sunshine, its sunsets, its curious animals, birds and vegetation. My love for Australia has never changed.

It is wonderful to live in an island. Doubly wonderful to live in an island-continent. Australians owe much to Providence. The climate in Australia varies from the west coast of Tasmania, where it rains 300 days a year to the Never-Never Land in Central Australia where droughts last for years.

The first preconceived idea I had to unlearn was that Australia was "disloyal." We had been told that Australia was run by Labour politicians who desired to break up the Empire. True, there were strong Labour Parties in each State. I met many of the Labour leaders, among others J. C. Watson, Sir George Pearce and Andrew Fisher, and I found their devotion to the British Commonwealth as great as my own.

"I spent over half an hour yesterday with Mr. J. C. Watson, ex-Prime Minister of Australia, and the real leader of the Labour movement. He is a splendid type, one of the finest politicians I have ever met." (*Letter*).

My ideas about Empire would have to be revised—all Parties, except a negligible quantity of extremists, were supporters of the Imperial connection. Australian audiences gave a wonderful response to the doctrine I was preaching. Great Britain seen from Australia is quite different from Great Britain seen from Canada. Australians of the third generation, who have never left their own country, still call Great Britain "Home." They *love* it.

The "freedom" of Australian life "out back" made a great appeal to me. Society was not divided into a dozen social strata. It was like the democratic west in Canada and the United States. Men were free and equal as the Creator made them. Up country all sections of the community were dependent for their livelihood on elemental things—on the weather, the soil and sun for their crops, for timber, for their stock, and on the bowels of the earth for mineral wealth. They were very near nature.

We held meetings for sheep-shearers and station hands on the stations, for miners at the gold and copper mines. We visited most parts of Australia from the far interior of Queensland to the coastal belt in the Tropics, from the big cities in New South Wales, Victoria and S. Australia to the smaller up-country towns, from the mining towns in Tasmania to Western Australia. When you had a definite purpose in visiting a country you got to know it quite differently from the globe-trotter.

The tour gathered momentum. I soon became accustomed to large meetings and great displays of patriotic fervour. At Brisbane on Empire Day, 1913, I addressed an audience of over 2,000. I thought of our Empire Day gathering at Ottawa the previous year, when I was overcome with nervousness because one of my hearers had fallen asleep. During the interval I had addressed 138 meetings. I had become accustomed to speaking in all possible circumstances. At Brisbane the Overseas League scored a triumph. For the first time all sections

of the community celebrated Empire Day. The Royal Society of St. George, the Caledonian Society, the Australian Natives Association and the Irish Society joined hands with us to make the celebration a success.

Great funds of enthusiasm, energy and health are required on an organising tour. Travelling "out back" is hard work. Frequent night journeys, roughing it in up-country inns, early starts, unappetising food, heat, insects, days spent in the train, and the work of organising, letter writing, apart from speaking and social functions, make heavy demands.

I give a typical week from my diary of our tour in Queensland in April, 1913:

A WEEK'S ITINERARY.

Monday, 14th—

Toowoomba.—Went to Iron Foundry to interview members. 4.0 p.m., Reception Technical School (200 present). 8.0, Our meeting, 500–600 present, *very* enthusiastic. Bed after midnight.

Tuesday, 15th—

Toowoomba.—10.30, Address to 160 boys Toowoomba Grammar School. Train 1.0 to 6.0 p.m. Committee meeting Brisbane, 9.0 p.m. Left by train at 10.15 p.m. Night in train.

Wednesday, 16th—

Maryborough.—Arrive Maryborough 6.30 a.m. Interviewing members, including Ironworks, all morning. Public meeting 8.0 p.m. Bed 12.15.

Thursday, 17th—

Bundaberg.—Left Maryborough at 7.0 a.m. Arrived Bundaberg 10.35 a.m. Reception by Mayor on Railway Platform. Short speech. With members all day. Committee meeting.

Friday, 18th—

Gympie.—Left Bundaberg 7.45 a.m. and arrived Gympie at 1.0. Civic Reception on platform. Short speech. 3.0, Visit to Gympie High School, where I spoke, very appreciative audience. 4.0, Town Hall Reception. Speech. 8.0 p.m, Public meeting 300–400. Bed 1.0 a.m.

Saturday, 19th—

Gympie.—Went down Gold Mine all morning. 4.0 p.m., Out-of-door Reception, about 200. Speech. 9.0–10.15 p.m., Committee meeting.

In lighter vein my sister in her diary thus described a day up country :

“ There is no possibility of sleeping late. Early tea, sweet and strong, is thrust under your mosquito curtain at 7 a.m. without fail. If you doze off afterwards you are roused twenty minutes later by the maid knocking at the door and asking for the cup. At 7-30 and again at 8 a cracked gong resounds throughout the establishment. By that time you are resigned to the necessity of getting up and ready to forage for hot water on the off-chance of getting it.

“ At breakfast the butter, jam and sugar are thick with flies, and you eat ants with your fruit and drink them with your tea.

“ You never have the joy of pouring out your own tea. It is always brought to you poured out, as the waiter prefers it, and not as you like it. If you fail to appear punctually for lunch at one o'clock and *dinner* at six-thirty, the greasy soup will be cold, likewise the tinned vegetables. The menu is torn from you while you are vainly deciding which sort of mutton you will risk, knowing very well that in all probability it will be goat !

“ The food is thrust at you by smart young ‘ ladies,’ who, condescending to wait, are in a hurry to be off to the Pictures or the Skating Rink. . . .

“ You seek your bedroom, mayhap the slops are not emptied. You slaughter all visible mosquitoes, chase cockroaches and retire behind your mosquito curtain, congratulating yourself on getting to bed early. You have been overhasty. The hotel is wooden, the bar is underneath you. The town folk foregather. Pandemonium ensues. Before midnight, however, you drop off to sleep, dreaming of an Imperialist’s lot.”

During my postcard days I used to catalogue towns and districts in Great Britain according to their enthusiasm for postcards. I now made a mental map of Australia,

according to enthusiasm for the Overseas cause. Compared to the rest of the Empire, Australia came out very well and very near the top of the list stood Sydney and Melbourne.

"Arriving back in Sydney, on May 26th, was a very different matter from when we were first here. There was a large deputation to meet us at the station. We got out of the sleeper feeling jaded and travel-stained. Much to the edification of the porters and guards I was presented with the first illuminated address on parchment I have ever received. W. was presented with a bouquet." (*Letter*).

The following are typical extracts from letters to my cousin during my speaking campaign :

April 18,

Gympie, Queensland.

"I lay down on my bed before dinner quite used up, as this week has been so tiring ; I have made three speeches already to-day and we have our members' meeting this evening."

Townsville, Queensland.

"We are now on our way home as at Cairns, North Queensland, we turned round ; it was about our furthest point and now every week we shall be getting closer to England. I have spent rather a disturbed night as my room in on the ground floor, opening to a wide veranda. The rats have been rushing about on the veranda ever since midnight and kept waking me up just when I had fallen asleep."

Queenstown, Tasmania,

July 3rd, 1913.

"Just a little mining town on the very edge of civilization ; got here last night after eleven hours' journey. Meetings on four evenings running is really too much of a strain. Our audience was composed of miners ; they were very hearty. Last week was the most tiring we have had in all our wanderings, I think. We had meetings five nights running and four early starts, and when we arrived here yesterday afternoon I felt utterly done up."

Melbourne, Victoria.

"We have just been to Warrnambool where we had a very successful meeting; between four and five hundred people paid for admission. This is the first time people have paid to hear the story of the League. Warrnambool is 150 miles to the west of Melbourne along the sea coast and one of the oldest places in Victoria."

One of the best meetings of the tour was held in the Town Hall at Melbourne:

Oriental Hotel,
Melbourne,

July 11th, 1913.

"Well, the meeting is over, and it was quite one of the most successful we have ever had; you have no idea of the enthusiasm. The Council Chamber in the Town Hall was packed. The Lord Mayor of Melbourne, the Governor of Victoria, Mr. 'Andy' Fisher, the ex-Prime Minister of Australia, the leader of the Labour Party and any number of other big-wigs were on the platform. I felt in excellent form and quite at home with the audience. Altogether our last night in Victoria has been a wonderfully successful one."

The final meeting of the Overseas Crusade was at His Majesty's Theatre, Perth, Western Australia. We had an audience of 2,400, the largest of the trip. Kind old Sir Harry Barron, the Governor, was in the chair, the Salvation Army Silver Band played the music, and the Boy Scouts and local patriotic societies turned out in full strength. It was a splendid finale to five months crusading.

To know Australia and love her, you must go up-country—to the small country town, to the great rolling plains. There you feel the attraction of a landscape entirely different from ours, the 400 varieties of "gum" trees, the golden wattle, the brilliant strange flowers and flowering shrubs.

Australia has been colonized *from* the coast. The big towns are seaports. The further you go from the sea the fewer people you find. Single-gauge railways run inland for a few hundred miles, then you come to the rail-

head. The centre of Australia is the Never-Never Land ; it is practically uninhabited. The nearest we got to this remote district was at the railheads in Queensland. We there made our acquaintance with the Australian "Bush" when we motored from one railhead to another. Being in the "Bush" merely signifies "out in the country." There may not be a tree in sight. At last we were "out back" away from railways—on the eternal plains, the land where cattle and sheep roam in their tens of thousands, a remote land, where we passed an occasional "station" * and a few slow-moving bullock teams, bringing the sheep clip to the railhead in enormous bales.

The first sight of kangaroos lolloping along through the "scrub" was an exciting moment. By the time we left Central Queensland we were accustomed to emus, wallabies, and other strange birds and beasts. The emus squatted on the tussocky grass, their long necks looking like thin tree stumps.

"Several friends had tame kangaroos. At one farmhouse the kangaroo used to come to the drying green every washing day. He searched out his master's trousers, hanging on the clothes' line ; he would stick his front paws into the legs and have a good swing. Kangaroos make nice pets" (*my sister's diary*). "I am glad to say I have never seen a kangaroo being killed."

No tour of Australia is complete without a visit to a big "station." The dearth of water is one of the chief problems. We were in one district where there had recently been a five years' drought, and where children had grown up without ever seeing a blade of grass ; cattle and sheep had died of thirst in their tens of thousands.

The old-time "bush-house" is a long rambling bungalow with a pretty little garden at one side, and, on the other, outbuildings, barns, dairy, and the bachelors' quarters for the stock men, "jackaroos" (green-hands), apprentices and boundary riders. This station was 240,000 acres in extent and had 100,000 sheep. Farther back in the Never-Never Land I heard of a station 2,000 square miles in size.

* Cattle or sheep station.

Life in the Never-Never country tends to make the children very self-reliant. A woman, whose parents were the first white settlers in the Murchison district, told me that her little brother, aged 13, had to take down a "mob" of cattle to the coast, many hundreds of miles away, with some black-fellows. There was no one else to send. His mother did not hear from him for seven weeks and he had to pass through country inhabited by hostile tribes. But she let him go, knowing it was part of his training. Small wonder that pioneer life produces such a hardy breed.

At Townsville, in the coastal belt of Queensland, is established a tropical school of medicine. A Viennese doctor was in charge. Experiments were being carried out to ascertain how far the white race can live without racial deterioration in the Tropics—a very real problem in Queensland. Young scientists, engaged on research, were at work. In one room mosquitoes were being bred. At the back of the house was a heartbreaking sight for the animal-lover—a house full of caged monkeys, guinea-pigs, white rats, rabbits, opossums, for experimental purposes. As we left this temple of research our host pointed to a little dying monkey—a victim to science. The poor little creature, with wan face and emaciated body, crawled to the side of the cage. He pushed forward his head to be stroked by his friend and destroyer.

We were present in a small up-country town at the "eight hours' day" celebration. The inhabitants gave themselves up to merry-making. Headed by some goat carriages, a procession of decorated lorries, representing the sheep-shearers' union, the bakers, the printers, the tailors, and many other trades, made its way through the streets. Realism went so far as to show an ox and sheep being killed on a butcher's lorry. The spectators, including hundreds of children, paid but scant attention to it. Slaughtering animals in a stock-raising country was part of the daily round.

The lack of privacy was a trial. We rarely had meals alone—friendly fellow-members, on seeing the Overseas League badge, would ask if they might sit at our table.

In these talks we learnt much about the Empire, but we yearned to be alone before our evening meetings. How was one to draw in inspiration, to have something to give, if one could not be by one's self? It was not possible to do justice to the cause if you were making small talk to the very last moment, as was usually the case.

"Our meeting here last night was splendid, quite one of the best during the whole trip; there were nearly a thousand people, at the back of the hall they were packed like sardines. The audience stood up and waved handkerchiefs when I began. This was the first time this has happened to me.

"I was not satisfied with my speech, though. I did not speak as well as I can. Audiences are so curious, they vary greatly: one may say exactly the same thing on different occasions, and it will be received entirely differently. Dr. Horton (of Hampstead) once told me that he never knew when he was going to speak well." (*Letter.*)

"In my last letter I was telling you that I was dissatisfied with the speech I made before a large audience and just when I wanted to be carried away, I wasn't. Well, I had to make speeches both the following days, and on both occasions I felt slightly nervous. On both these occasions I know I carried real conviction. I gave the best I have to give. Isn't it curious how one's moods vary?" (*Letter.*)

May 8,

Townsville,

N. Queensland.

"We are lunching with the Bishop of North Queensland to-day; he has just been consecrated. He has a very fine face, and for the last six years has been head of the Bush Brotherhood in New South Wales. It is wonderful what the Anglican Church is doing here. The clergy we have met for the most part are splendid examples of the best type of Englishman. You have no idea how impressed I have been with the Church of England priests in Queensland, they are wonderful." (*Letter.*)

"I have met a number of very interesting people and am

getting in touch with those behind the scenes. I had one of the pleasantest dinners last night I have had since leaving London. Sir Edmund Barton, the father of the Commonwealth and first Prime Minister of Australia, asked me to dine quietly with him to meet Alfred Deakin. Deakin has been three times Prime Minister and has only recently retired.

"I heard him make one of the best speeches I have ever heard at the Guildhall at the Imperial Conference in 1907, and have been wanting to meet him ever since. The fourth man was a rising barrister, T. R. Bavin,* such a nice young man, full of ideals and a strong leaning towards social reform. I never had three more interesting hours. Sir Edmund had a wonderful dinner ordered which we had in a sumptuous room at Menzies Hotel all to ourselves; it was decorated with roses." (*Letter.*)

It was a thrilling experience for a young Englishman of thirty to be brought into such intimate contact with the greatest figures in Australian public life. I wondered whether British statesmen of equal prominence would have thought it worth their while to devote an evening to a young Australian, whose chief qualification was his enthusiasm for the Empire ideal.

Government House, Adelaide,

July 14, 1913.

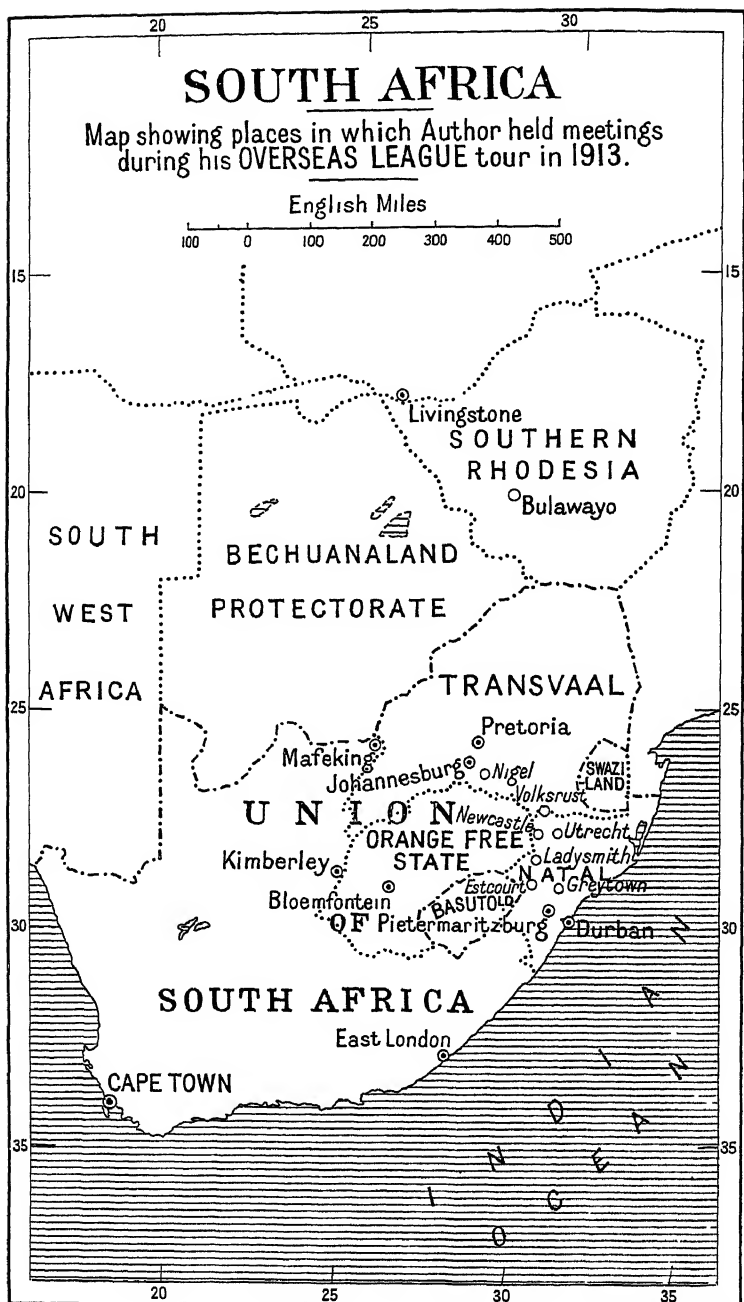
"I am so much at home in Australia that I am dreadfully sorry to be leaving so soon. You see so long as I am out in the Empire I am doing just the work that I want to. When I get home everything is uncertain and I don't know what I shall be doing. And again there, nobody knows anything about the Overseas League and what it is aiming at, while here, thanks to the Press, everyone knows about it, all of which I tell myself is very good for me. After having been made much of, it is very good for one to become a nonentity again, and besides it helps one to give things their proper values." (*Letter.*)

From Perth we went to Albany, the port from which our steamer the *Nestor*, of the Blue Funnel Line, sailed

* Subsequently Premier of N. S. Wales.

for South Africa. My last memory of Australia was of early spring days spent at Albany, where I picked many strange flowers—pink myrtle, pale gold orchids, blue leschenaultia, scarlet elephant's trunk, emerald and crimson kangaroo paws. We explored the beautiful countryside in the neighbourhood. I was glad that my last memories of Australia were of its wonderful countryside.

On one of my last mornings I walked into the bush alone. and took stock of my conception of the British Empire. On the eve of the final stage of my Imperial pilgrimage my ideas were crystallizing. The world-Empire to which I was ready to devote my life was a Commonwealth of free peoples in which there must be full scope for the most developed form of Canadian, Australian, South African and Irish Nationalism. Such an Empire would not go the way of the Empires of the past, it rested on lasting foundations.



CHAPTER XXIV

SOUTH AFRICA—THE LAND OF PROBLEMS

DURING the voyage we only saw one ship, the *Suevic* of the White Star Line, also westward bound. We were in the "roaring forties," one of the loneliest stretches of ocean in the world. We were a speck upon immeasurable waters, our only companions were the albatrosses. I loved their stately swooping flight, the intense whiteness of their breasts. I thought of *Masterman Ready* and the *Ancient Mariner*. We kept in touch with the far-off world by occasional wireless messages. There was something uncanny in the thought that, despite this wireless contact, if anything serious happened to us in all probability no human aid could reach us.

We led our little self-contained life for two weeks in our remote world of three or four hundred souls, thus mysteriously thrown together. A little cosmos in undulating space. We were a mixed assembly. Some Dutch farmers who had been studying agricultural methods in Australia—our first contact with Boer fellow-citizens—an admiral's wife—a New Zealand missionary, who went to live among cannibals in New Britain in the South Seas thirty years before—an American woman journalist—German business men—and Mr. Oscar Ashe, Miss Lily Brayton and their complete "Kismet" touring company, including Nubian slaves, donkeys and a snake. On fine days the donkeys were taken out of their temporary stable and we used to watch the snake sunning himself on the hatch.

Journeying by steamer from one world to another world has its advantages. You have time to prepare yourself for new conditions, almost unconsciously you absorb the new atmosphere.

Australia gradually receded. With our Dutch friends we began discussing South African problems, the native question, the relations of Dutch and British, the Boer War.

With the coloured members of the "Kismet" Company I discussed the eternal problem of "colour"—so important in the British Commonwealth. My friends were quite ready to talk. I tried to see life as they saw it. I tried to imagine what life would seem like if I had a black skin. I thought of their constant humiliations, walking the streets of Sydney, N.S.W., trying to get accommodation. It was seven hours before they could find an hotel that would take them in. But as an Englishman I had no cause for national self-satisfaction.

Bloomsbury boarding-house keepers were not famed for their Imperial brotherliness. It was one thing to sing "Rule Britannia," and talk about the glories of "the Empire on which the sun never set," and quite another when it came to "having truck with niggers."

I was glad to hear from my negro friends that they had been happier in England than elsewhere. They had walked one of the large London Hospitals. "You are kind to us, but in your heart we know you hate us; the sorrows of the black man have yet to be written," they said.

August 26th, 1913,

s.s. *Nestor*,

nearing Durban.

"South Africa seems in many ways much more familiar than Australia did when we landed, yet just because the prospect seems easy I shall probably find it much more difficult than I expect. Besides I have so much to learn about the native and Dutch problems.

"It is so curious to think that in all probability to-morrow evening we shall be in the whirl of Overseas meetings again. I know our first four weeks in Natal will be very full." (*Letter.*)

Dolphins gambolled about our bows as we entered the mouth of the river at Durban. A very cordial greeting was awaiting us. A deputation from our Pietermaritzburg branch had come down specially to welcome us to South Africa. Of all the Dominions South Africa gave us the warmest welcome. As matters turned out the Overseas League tour in South Africa, although satisfactory, was

not as successful as in either Australia or New Zealand.

Waiting motors took us the fifty-four miles from Durban to Pietermaritzburg. I fell under the spell of South Africa—that indescribable something that differentiates the country from all others. Durban appeared on first sight a mixture of Australia and the British West Indies.

"We motored past the 'Valley of the Thousand Hills.' A great sense of exhilaration possessed us. We are in a strange country once more—a land of romance and colour, full of natives, possessing an enthralling history, teeming with problems. I drank in the cool mountain air and looked over the hills, groups of haycocks clustered on their shoulders, the colour of the ground. They were Kaffir kraals, and as it grew dark a spot of distant fire showed from each. We passed numbers of Kaffirs on the road. They jumped and laughed at the sound of our horn, and we laughed back and Colonel Wales* shouted a greeting in Zulu." (*My sister's diary-letter.*)

The South African Crusade started with a banquet in the Town Hall of Pietermaritzburg. As soon as I stood up to speak I "sensed" that I was in a different country. The audience was more "select." The democratic spirit of Australia was gone. We were back in a country of class distinctions. It was more like home.

For the most part our audiences in South Africa were middle-class. Except on the Rand, where there were white miners, we did not have many working men and artisans at our gatherings. I was unfamiliar with the whole set of new problems in South Africa. I must go very warily on the subject of "colour," on British-Dutch relations, on the Indian problem. At our first meeting each of the six Parties was represented and there were present South African Dutch and Hollanders (European Dutch).

After I sat down I was told the editor of the local Hertzogite paper was present. He subsequently expressed his willingness to join the League. I regarded this "conversion" as a real triumph. My scheme of Empire provided room for extreme Dominion nationalism. I became more sure of my ground. We drove back to the Camden Hotel

* Chairman of our Pietermaritzburg Branch.

from our meeting in rickshaws. It was a starry night, the air was balmy. I sat back in my rickshaw and listened to the soft pad-pad of the Zulu's bare feet on the roadway. When the road began to ascend I heard his panting with a pang. Could it be right to use human beings as beasts of burden?

A first visit to a Kaffir kraal was an event. You crept inside a thing looking like a small haystack and squatted down with the natives on the floor. The hut was surprisingly clean, and in the centre a small fire burned between the two poles which supported the roof.

A string was stretched across from pole to pole, and on it hung something mysterious—it turned out to be the dried inside of a cat, supplied by the local witch doctor to ward off the evil eye. The men seemed to have as many wives as they could afford, and in those days a wife cost from 10 to 50 head of cattle.

In South Africa you could never forget the complex nature of the British Empire. At every large meeting there were Dutch in the audience and the problem of building up a united Afrikaner nation was ever in the back of my mind.

In every hotel visited racial problems confronted you, silent Hindus waited at table ready to do the white man's bidding. I much disliked the prevailing custom of snapping your fingers when you wanted to call an Indian servant. The Kaffir members of the establishment appeared to keep entirely apart from the Indians. The Kaffirs had a peculiar smell that reminded me of the West Indian negroes. We were told that the natives on their side disliked the smell of the white man.

South Africa was primarily a black man's country. Unless there was a large-scale white immigration, South Africa seemed destined to remain a "black dominion." The Dutch regarded the prospect of introducing British immigrants with disfavour. Thoughtful people frequently told me that South Africa was and would always remain a "black man's country," and that a large working-class immigration, on the Canadian or Australian scale, was out of the question.

During our tour we came across many strange birds and beasts. Hartebeest, buck and baboons. Perhaps the most exciting moment was the first sight of a "hippo." We were boating on the Zambesi; suddenly we saw a dark object with bulging eyes and small ears on the surface of the water, and then it sank and there was hardly a ripple. Apparently hippos are harmless and never attack human beings. Shooting them sounded very poor sport. . . .

At a wayside station in Bechuanaland we watched a native feeding a baby antelope. The native filled his mouth with milk and then squatted on the ground. He took a wooden tube between his lips and blew the milk into the baby buck's mouth. One way of acting as foster-mother.

Our meetings in South Africa were not as large as those in Canada, New Zealand or Australia. The average attendance was two or three hundred. I often thought longingly of Australia and its warm-hearted audiences running into four figures. I especially disliked the "socials" which were popular here. I was often too tired to enjoy these gatherings. I much preferred public meetings.

But if our audiences lacked size they provided variety. Australia was an all-British community, here I had many nationalities to address. In some ways I was reminded of Quebec Province with its two races or of the Prairie Provinces in Western Canada.

Plough Hotel,
Escourt, Natal.

"I am feeling rather tired at the moment as we have had meetings on Friday, Monday and Tuesday. A Masonic ball we had to attend last night, and we travelled all Saturday night. To-night we have a meeting, an early start to-morrow morning at 5-0 a.m., a meeting in the evening, meeting on Monday and Tuesday." (*Letter.*)

Utrecht, Natal.

"We only got away from our meeting at Escourt at

midnight on Thursday, and we had to get up at four the next morning. A public function that evening at Newcastle, an early start yesterday, 6 a.m., and then a meeting here last night.

"I think last night was one of the most successful meetings we have ever had. At least from my standpoint. This is an entirely Dutch town, more than three-quarters of the audience were Dutch, and all the men fought against us in the war. They were very appreciative about what I said, and the doctor here who fought against us got up afterwards and said he would like to start a branch of the League at Utrecht." (*Letter.*)

On looking back I consider that our meeting at Utrecht, Natal, an entirely Dutch dorp, was the most successful of the tour. The Chairman of the Local Board (who corresponds to the Mayor in an English town) introduced me first in English, then in Dutch. As I stood up and faced the audience in the packed Town Hall, the majority of whom were Dutch, I got one of the greatest thrills I have ever had as an Empire lecturer.

My hearers belonged to another race, the men had taken the field against Great Britain ten years previously. The British Commonwealth was a wonderful thing. It could include within its orbit former foes. The Overseas League was about to be started in a Dutch town. If Dutch South Africa was ready to remain within the Empire the miracle was due to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's enlightened policy. Our meeting ended with the singing of the National Anthem. This kind of crusading was very much worth while. When I got to bed I dropped asleep with a thankful heart.

At Utrecht we went for an expedition with a party of Dutchmen, all of whom had fought against us during the war. We sat among the rocks on the top of a hill and our friends gave us "naartjes" (native tangerines) to eat, and we asked them to tell us reminiscences of the war.

They were delighted to air their views. For Tommy Atkins they had nothing but admiration. From their standpoint British officers had brought too much kit. "They were far too heavily encumbered and some of

them actually brought pianos to the front : they also insisted on having baths on campaign." A Dutch friend, who had fought against us at Spion Kop, and whose father had commanded some of the Dutch forces at Majuba, said, "Why, one night, a Colonial trooper, whom we took prisoner, saw a sentry outside an officer's tent, and asked him what on earth he was doing at that hour of the night, and he replied : ' Oh, I'm keeping up the fire as the Colonel must have hot water in the morning.' " Our Dutch friends certainly believed the story, though probably it lost nothing by repetition. I asked them to name the three Englishmen they most admired, and they replied : " Gladstone, Campbell-Bannerman and W. T. Stead," and the three they most disliked, " Rhodes, Milner and Chamberlain."

A visit to a back-veldt Dutch homestead was an interesting experience. We were driven across the veldt in a double-hooded dog-cart called a " spider." On arrival at the farm we were shown into the best parlour and were welcomed by " Mevrouw " Jordaan and her fair-headed family. We sat stiffly round the walls while tea was handed to us. Mevrouw spoke no English, but her burly bearded husband and children were bi-lingual. On the floor were dyed goat-skins, on the walls family portraits of dour-looking ancestors, and in the centre of the room an old stiff chair with a seat of plaited thongs, made by voortrekker ancestors.

The back-veldt farmer's ideal is to get so far off into the veldt that he can see no neighbours' smoke from his stoep (veranda). He likes to lead his own life in his own way, as his father did before him. His habits and ways of thought remain unchanged.

I shall always remember Estcourt, Natal. We had already spoken twice and were billed to address an open meeting in one of the two halls in the main street. As we sat at dinner in our hotel, before the meeting, we watched with interest a pale woman with red hair and four men. They were the famous " White Rat " Company, making a three years' world tour with their troop of performing white rats. I felt apprehensive. Could Estcourt support two

entertainments, if it were permissible so to designate an Overseas League meeting? I sympathised with the townsfolk. In their place I am sure I should have gone to see the white rats.

Despite my forebodings we had a full house, as did our white rat friends. Apparently Estcourt could support two "shows" a night. When I retired to rest that evening I pondered on the variety of life. Here was I thinking it was my duty to travel round the Empire for the Overseas cause. My neighbour at dinner spent her life travelling, year in, year out, displaying performing white rats.

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On several occasions I was attacked as the paid emissary of the *Daily Mail*. These attacks came to a head in Pretoria. On the day of our public meeting the *Pretoria Chronicle* had published an article on the Overseas League tour. It concluded:

"Why Mr. Wrench and his sister should receive semi-regal honours throughout the British Empire we fail to understand. Imperialism will work out its allotted end in this country without the aid of these glorified young lions of the Harmsworth journalistic staff, who appear to have discovered a very excellent method of travelling round the world and having a good time at other people's expense, by virtue of a pumpish-fluidity of speech."

There was an atmosphere of expectancy at our large meeting that evening. I enjoyed the fight. The paper had played into my hands. I took item by item and assured the audience that the Overseas League was not a newspaper stunt. I ended my remarks by inviting the editor of the offending paper to join our Crusade on the same terms as myself, viz.: "to pay his own expenses," as we needed willing workers. Next day the *Chronicle* made the *amende honorable* and published an excellent and full account of our meeting.

Although I did not admit it in public, just at this period of the Overseas League's history I was passing through anxious moments.

Ever since I started the Overseas League in 1910 I had feared that Northcliffe primarily regarded my scheme as an offshoot of the Overseas *Daily Mail*, because I was editor of that paper when the movement was started. I was apprehensive lest in my absence he should give instructions for the members to be circularised in the interests of the Overseas *Daily Mail*. I feared that if this were done all my work would be undone. I had gone round the Empire preaching the new Imperialism and a deeper patriotism. I had assured countless audiences that the scheme had no hidden purpose, it was not a newspaper circulation scheme. When I was in London the membership file was in my office, and no one could touch it. I left it in the hands of my faithful secretary, Miss Hansard, and our trusted chief clerk, S. C. Player.

News reached me at Pretoria that Northcliffe had given instructions for the Overseas League members to be circularised from our file requesting them to become subscribers to the Overseas *Daily Mail*. My worst fears were realised. I made up my mind to return to London as soon as possible and put the affairs of our young movement into the hands of a properly constituted committee. I would much sooner not have referred to this incident but in justice to an organisation that has become a force in the Empire, I think it is necessary to make the position clearer.

The wound was very raw when we were staying with Lord Gladstone at Government House, Pretoria. A kinder or more considerate host it would have been impossible to find. Lord Gladstone saw that we needed rest and we paid two happy visits to Government House. Of his own accord he volunteered to act as Patron of the League in South Africa. I gratefully accepted his offer. His name counted for much with the Dutch.

It was a joy discussing South African problems with a Dutchman with the vision of General Botha. My first meeting with him was at Volksrust railway station in the Transvaal. The General was electioneering and his private railway carriage was drawn up in the siding. A Dutch-

man, by name Joubert, who had lost his arm fighting the British, ushered us into the General's presence.

General Botha was a fine-looking man. He had clear grey-green eyes, a firm handshake and a pleasant smile. He was dignified, simple and accessible. He had personal magnetism. Those far-seeing eyes were accustomed to wide spaces.

The General had to attend a political meeting at Wakkers-troom, fifteen miles away, so our first interview was a brief one. Three hundred mounted burghers had come to escort him. He descended from his private railway carriage and, mounting a horse, rode off in the cavalcade. A picturesque entourage for an Empire Prime Minister.

As I looked at the clouds of dust of the receding horse-men, I thought of the extraordinary metamorphosis of eleven years. Then General Botha was doing all he could to drive the British into the sea; now he was the trusted ruler of a British Dominion, respected by British and Boer alike.

I had talks with General Botha in his home and at his office at Pretoria. He was an intense patriot, he loved his own country, but he saw the larger vision. He worked whole-heartedly for the cause of co-operation between the self-governing nations of the British Commonwealth.

The General's office was in the beautiful Government buildings at Pretoria: a kind of modern acropolis, designed by Sir Herbert Baker. The General had a high room, with a large balcony on which he took me. Here we discussed Empire and South African problems. Botha talked of how the Union came into being, how he "had forced the pace" and that, while he had been misunderstood by some, he was confident that future generations would realise that he had worked for the good of South Africa.

He was very proud of the Government buildings, he wanted them to stand as an example of what a United South Africa could do. We discussed the question of Naval defence, and Botha said he preferred the scheme of an Australian Navy to the suggestion of a contribution to the Imperial Fleet. "Hertzog is causing us a good

deal of trouble at the moment, especially as he has two very influential backers in Generals de Wet and Steyn," he said; but "I do not fear my opponents." He wished me well in my Empire Crusade and in taking leave of me, putting his hand on my shoulder, said, "I am so glad, my dear Wrench, you take the big view of Empire, which permits of the full development of South African Nationalism."

The last time I saw General Botha was at a dinner he and Mrs. Botha were good enough to give us at their house in Pretoria in October, 1913. It was an informal affair. Among the guests were Mr. J. Rissik, the Administrator of the Transvaal, after whom the town of Johannesburg was called, and his wife. Everyone spoke excellent English. On the side table in the dining-room were three gold caskets, one of which contained the freedom of the City of London, presented to the General in 1907.

We talked agriculture. The General said he wanted to introduce improved farming methods among the Dutch. "My real loves are my farm, my cattle and my sheep; these politics are a worry. I should like to give them up and live peacefully on my farm"—an ideal which, alas, he was never able to carry out.

Of the pre-war statesmen of Greater Britain, Laurier, Deakin, Massey and Botha, I would put Botha first. He was among the first of his fellow-countrymen to recognise what British and Dutch co-operation might do for his dear South Africa.

In Natal every wayside station, every hill brought back poignant memories of the South African war. There was Spion Kop, Harts Hill, Frere, Colenso and the Tugela River. Our first sight of British graves was near the Tugela, after a jerky night journey by train from Durban; the sun was rising over the rolling brown-yellow hills, studded here and there with emerald green weeping-willow and thorn-bushes. A few white crosses protected by iron railings on the bare slopes told their sad story.

"Royal Hotel, Ladysmith,
"September 15th, 1913.

"Yesterday we went to Evensong in the dear little church which was built as a memorial to all those who lost their lives in the Siege and in the Relief Expedition. The complete list of the 3,400 men who died during the War is engraved on slabs of marble. . . .

"We were taken out to Spion Kop (nineteen miles) by motor. The view from the top is wonderful, seventy miles in all directions, including the Drakensburg, Basutoland and Orange Free State. The far-away hills were such wonderful shades of pale blues and purples. The graves of the hundreds of our men who were sacrificed so needlessly on that day are nicely kept. It is a wonderful cemetery to be buried in, on a mountain top." (*Letter.*)

It was a steep climb to the summit over brown slippery grass. Nameless graves with the words, painted in black, "Here rests a brave burgher," or, "Here rest brave soldiers," were dotted about. Spion Kop was one of the tragedies of the war. The British gained the summit, but did not know that victory was theirs. While the Boers were retiring they found that the British were also retiring. They therefore promptly re-occupied their previous positions. The British losses were over 1,300 dead. If the British Commanders had listened to local advice and done what Lord Dundonald had wanted them to, Spion Kop need never have been stormed; Ladysmith could have been reached by a detour.

As we stood in silence on the hill where the British and Boer dead lay, I wondered if all this bloodshed and suffering had been necessary. Might not a little more patience on both sides, a little more ability to understand the opposite point of view, have prevented the struggle? Or was the clash inevitable?

The top of Spion Kop was a good place for meditation. The world was bathed in sunshine. There was silence under the blue vault of heaven, save for the droning of insects and the rustling of the wind in the dry grass.

Rhodes' spirit broods over Cape Town and Rhodesia. Bulawayo is like a town in the Canadian West. In the main street there were two monuments—a gun, in memory of those who fell in the Matabele War, and a big bronze figure of a man with his arms behind his back, seemingly addressing a crowd. The statue was without inscription. It could only have been of one man, the founder of the country.

Our first excursion was naturally to the Rhodes estate in the Matoppos—a country apart. After leaving a level land of thorn trees behind we found ourselves among great boulders of fantastic shape. Baboons chattered round the foot of a giant rock like an imperturbable Buddha.

A footpath wound across a hill of granite, worn smooth by the rain of ages. On the summit was a circle of huge granite rocks, in the midst was a slab inscribed with the words, "Here lie the remains of Cecil John Rhodes."

Bulawayo, Rhodesia.

"The place where Rhodes is buried, in the Matoppos, twenty-nine miles from Bulawayo, is as wild and desolate a spot as you can imagine. His tomb is grand and awe-inspiring—just the opposite of Stevenson's in Samoa. Stevenson had overhanging hibiscus and swallows as sentinels. The only living things here were two speckled lizards and a wild rat, that scuttled away as we approached. The top of the hill is extraordinarily impressive. Only a big man in the sense of a Rhodes or a Napoleon could be buried in this place." (*Letter.*)

It is a wonderful tomb for an empire builder. Beyond the great rocks is the so-called "World's View," a sea of petrified breakers tumbled about in the wildest confusion. Only one small human habitation was to be seen. I stood very still as I wanted to impress the scene on my memory. I pondered on the littleness of human achievement and the transitoriness of fame. Cecil Rhodes gave himself 4,000 years in which he would be remembered. Suddenly there was a crash through the thorn bushes just in front of the path and a lovely little buck came flying by to a kopje ahead. My train of thought had been disturbed.

We dined at the Matoppo Estate Hotel and motored back to Bulawayo in the moonlight—the time to see Africa at its best after the heat of the day.

On the outskirts of Cape Town, on the lower slopes of Devil's Peak, are situated Rhodes Park and Groote Schuur (Great Barn), Rhodes' home. It was built at the time of Simon Van der Stel, to store the Dutch East India Company's grain. It has been admirably rebuilt by Sir Herbert Baker in the old style. Cut into the wall above the main entrance is an old bas-relief depicting Van Riebeck landing in 1652.

We were shown over the house by a sympathetic coloured man, the last of Rhodes' servants. Rhodes' office, bedroom and bathroom had been left untouched. His bathroom was characteristic; an immense bath hewn out of a solid block of granite. I envied the owner of Groote Schuur. What a home for thinking out schemes!

In his room were displayed a tattered flag, designed by him for the Cape-to-Cairo Railway, the Union Jack uniting the flags of Egypt and the Cape. On the walls of the billiard room and of his bedroom were maps of the Cape-to-Cairo route with ink markings showing present progress. I pictured Rhodes standing in front of those maps dreaming of his "All Red" Africa.

Our guide told us that many Dutch people came to Groote Schuur. "They thought a great deal of Mr. Rhodes at one time, but there were some things they could never forgive; but I think they realise now what a great man he was and how much he loved South Africa."

After inspecting the house, we went to the place on the mountain two miles away where Rhodes dreamed his dreams. There stands the temple dedicated to his memory, "We broaden immensely, especially in this spot," he once said, "because we are always looking on that mountain. The sight of it gives us, while we retain our individual dogmas, immense breadth of feeling and consideration for all those who are striving to do good work and perhaps improve the conditions of humanity in general." At Groote Schuur I again fell under the Rhodes' spell for a

while. A rush of my boyhood feelings of hero-worship came back to me. I thought of my talks with Lord Grey at Ottawa in 1906 when I drew up, under Rhodes' inspiration, the plan of the Overseas League. How I wished that I had met Rhodes.

What, I wonder, would have been his reactions to the post-war world? Would he have seen the larger vision of World Federation? Would he have thrown his colossal energy into the attempt, not only to make the British Commonwealth stand in the van of human progress, but to work for the unity of the human race as a whole?

Watts' statue of Physical Energy appealed to Rhodes. On its pedestal he wanted to commemorate the completion of the Cape-to-Cairo Railway. He wished to place on its base the names of the first subscribers, together with the words: "These people believed the scheme was possible." In granite near the memorial are inscribed the words "Dedicated to the spirit and life of Cecil John Rhodes who loved and served South Africa so well."

We motored back through Muizenberg and saw the little thatched cottage where Rhodes died, and where Jameson caught his dying whisper: "So little done, so much to do."

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The last lap of the Crusade had been reached. We were at beautiful Cape Town, one of the most attractive towns in the Empire with lovely Cape Peninsular in its immediate vicinity. Cape Town combines the charm of the old and new worlds.

"The final meeting of the tour in the Dutch Reformed Church on Tuesday night was very successful. The audience was such a nice one to talk to and was so cordial and appreciative. I was so happy that our closing meeting should have been such a success. I felt everything I was saying tremendously, and there was great enthusiasm." (Letter.)

CHAPTER XXV

BACK IN LONDON—BEGINNING AGAIN

ON a hot South African November day we said good-bye to our friends on the jetty. The band played "Auld Lang Syne." A bugle sounded, the last hawser connecting the *Kinfauns Castle* with Africa fell with a splash into the water. We were homeward bound. There would be sixteen days to sort out the impressions of a world crusade, to prepare for the difficulties of ordinary life.

"Last night we were adding up our mileage covered since May 14 last year and it amounts to 64,000, or equal to three times round the world. I have spoken 250 times." (*Letter.*)

Just what had the Empire tour done for me? I had learnt more in these wanderings in five continents than I had in all my former life. For eighteen months I had been absorbing impressions. My whole outlook on life had changed. I had friends in all the parties in each of the Dominions now. I had mixed freely with people in all walks of life. One of the great lessons I had learned was that I was a plain Empire citizen, one of the people. *Civis Britannicus sum*. I saw a vision of a real democratic Commonwealth, in which the only aristocracy would be one of character and brains. I returned with a burning desire to help the "have-nots" and the "down-and-outs." We must discover a better way. Slumdom must be abolished. Miles of bricks and mortar must be pulled down, garden cities must be built.

I had seen countries in the making. I had seen failures in the old country become successful in these new worlds—men and women who had made good when given a second chance; I had witnessed new communities blazing fresh trails. In future I always saw Great Britain through Dominion eyes.

The Overseas Crusade had been divided into four clearly defined sections. In Canada I had seen new communities growing before my eyes out West. I had seen territories that

could absorb millions of willing workers. Here was a vast region where there was hope for the landless. The human being's hunger to own a plot of land could there be satisfied. Canada stood in my mind for the tilling of the soil, plains of waving wheatfields and great forests.

The lesson of Australia was of an advanced democracy devoted to the Imperial ideal—a great sunny continent, where workers from the old world could carve out a fresh career. It was a land of stock-raising, dairy-farming and fruit-growing. A country where the humblest in the land could rise to political prominence. I had met half a dozen Prime Ministers who started at the very bottom of the ladder.

New Zealand was smaller; it could not make the same impact on the mind as vast Canada or empty Continent Australia. But three months in New Zealand had left lasting impressions. A beautiful land with a high level of prosperity. For the first time in my life I had seen a country where there were no under-dogs, a happier Britain. If there were no great fortunes, there was no dire poverty. Every human being had a fair chance.

South Africa's chief message was that magnanimity paid in dealing with a conquered foe. When I witnessed the work of reconciliation achieved by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's enlightened policy in six years I was amazed. The Victor had given freedom to the Vanquished—a new doctrine among nations. The British treatment of South Africa will be held up for all time as a pattern for victors. Would that the Allies in 1918 had pursued a similarly enlightened policy of reconciliation! General Botha had said to me when he bade me farewell: "Remember, Wrench, you can tell your friends in England that so long as Britain sticks to her side of the bargain, we will stick to ours. We will stand by her." I little thought in October, 1913, that within ten months General Botha and his friends would prove by their acts that these were no idle words.

Visits to Ceylon, the South Sea Islands, and South Africa brought home to me the fact that ours was a coloured Empire. I knew from studying reference books at home that there were only 68,000,000 white British subjects in the Empire, that we had 400,000,000 coloured fellow-

subjects. But the fact that the whites were only a sixth of the total of His Majesty's subjects, for the first time made a deep impress on my consciousness. Old-fashioned doctrines of white predominance must go by the board. Equal rights for every civilised man was the only logical goal. We must take all these nations into partnership when they were ready for political advancement. The British Commonwealth was man's greatest political achievement. A family of nations enjoying "freedom, order and good government" under the rule of King George. The Crown was the link which united these realms scattered around the Seven Seas.

The eighteen months of the Crusade had been a deep spiritual experience. I thought of a Brahmin, who gave up his business career and went to the Himalayas in search of his soul. I had not been able to emulate him, but my Crusade had been my sanctuary. My companions had been mountains and prairies, sunsets and forests, tropic jungles, sun-scorched plains and the rolling ocean. My task was henceforth to help forward the unity of the British Empire, a fourth of the Human Race. The White man's burden was no narrow doctrine, it was to ease the Black man's burden, the Brown man's burden, the Yellow man's burden.

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On a dark, foggy, November morning we drew alongside Southampton quay. We had crept up the Solent during the night. Our siren had constantly been sounding as the skipper felt his way up the Channel. My father stood on the landing-stage to greet us. It was a happy moment seeing him.*

Home again!

As I walked down the gangway on to the soil of old England I braced myself for difficulties ahead. After a year and a half of practically continuous sunshine I felt the grey days, though I had seen nothing more lovely on my wanderings than the lights of London reflected in wet pavements on a November evening.

After living in the limelight for eighteen months it is not easy to return to private life, to become a nonentity again. I sympathised with retired Colonial officials.

When I was "crusading" round the Empire I had very often been over-tired. I had lived on my nerves. I may have grumbled at the round of civic receptions, garden-parties, socials, addresses of welcome and large meetings, but I felt I was building up my Empire Movement. I saw the results of my work. Back in London there was no glamour, only a few people were interested in what I was trying to do. I was just a young man with a "bee in his bonnet" who had chucked up excellent prospects for a fad.

I returned to a tiny back office in Carmelite House, just large enough for my secretary and myself. The office looked out on the backyard, where the *Evening News* vans came to collect their supplies. There was constant din, the distant roar of the printing-presses was audible. No sunshine penetrated to my desk. This was the smallest office I had ever occupied, much smaller than my office at 20, Haymarket in 1900 at the outset of my postcard career, much smaller than when I joined Northcliffe's staff.

I was prepared for hard times. I was ready to start at the bottom of the ladder again. But I had not reckoned with indifference. With a few exceptions my old business associates were not interested in my work. I never referred to my experiences overseas unless I was asked about them in future. My stock had plunged down like the New York market in October 1929. I was no longer worth cultivating. The sun no longer shone on me. My dark office was a symbol of my changed condition.

I determined to get away from Carmelite House, now a place of misery to me, as soon as I could arrange the financing of premises for the Overseas League. I started my career as a "beggar" for funds. Fate must have a grievance against me, because for the past twenty-one years I have always had to be collecting money. I was fairly successful in my financial campaign. My largest donor was an American friend, Alexander Smith Cochran, a great admirer of the British Empire. Twice he came to my rescue, when otherwise we would have gone on the rocks; he gave us between three and four thousand pounds. Without his help there would be no Overseas League to-day. Northcliffe, as President of the Society, gave

several generous donations amounting to over two thousand four hundred pounds. I got cheques from Lord Grey, Lord Rothermere, Lord Stevenson, Kennedy Jones, Sir Robert Williams, Sir George Sutton and others.

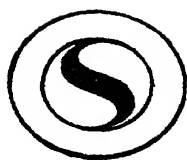
Shortly after my return I had got in touch with my friend, Richard Jebb, the author of *Colonial Nationalism*, and he consented to be first Chairman of the Overseas League. We formed an active Central Committee of men, who knew the far parts of the world. Henceforth the status of the League was clearly defined. There was no possibility in future of the aims and objects of the Overseas League being misunderstood. The Duke of Connaught became our Patron, we elected Northcliffe as first President and Lord Grey and other leading Imperialists as Vice-Presidents.

Six months after my return the premises of the Overseas League were ready. They were situated on the second floor of General Buildings, Aldwych. It was a happy day when I moved my effects and the Overseas League membership file from Carmelite House to our new quarters.

The official opening of the headquarters by the Lord Mayor of London took place on Empire Day, May 24th, 1914. There was a great array of celebrities. We received cables from most of the Empire leaders—Governors-General and Prime Ministers. They were all personal friends. Northcliffe was in the chair and he paid me a generous tribute. Old Sir George Reid, the Australian High Commissioner, was in a happy vein. We made an auspicious start.

My new office was also a back office as it had been at Carmelite House. I looked out at bricks and mortar. The sun did not shine into my room—no matter. There was sunshine in my heart. I was doing what I was meant to do. Henceforth I was bound by invisible links to every part of the Empire. There was hardly a town in the Dominions or a British Community in foreign lands with which I was not in weekly contact. The mustard seed had been planted. The Overseas "Crusade" had been justified. The Overseas League never looked back.

Would the road wind uphill all the way? I did not know—or care. The dream was coming true.



THE CREED OF AN IMPERIALIST

I believe in our glorious Empire of Free Peoples,
In the sacredness of our mission,
In the unselfishness of our aims.
I believe in our great past
And in a greater future,
In the emptiness of riches
And the dignity of labour.
I believe in right thinking and pure living
And in the inspirational power of woman.
I believe in national re-birth,
In a new Empire and a new world.
I believe in the need for humbleness,
In the vision of the mountain tops.
I believe in God's guidance in the days ahead.
I believe.

APPENDIX

Facts about the Overseas League.

The Overseas Club founded in 1910.

Empire tour of 64,000 miles in 1912-13, during which Canada, Ceylon, West Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, New Zealand, South Sea Islands, Natal, Transvaal, Orange Free State, Rhodesia, and Cape Province were visited.

Evelyn Wrench re-organized Overseas Club in 1913, on his return to England, and placed control in the hands of a Committee of which Mr. Richard Jebb was first Chairman (1913) and Lord Northcliffe first President.

London premises made possible, thanks to a gift from American friend, Mr. Alexander Smith Cochran.

London premises at General Buildings, Aldwych, opened by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Thomas Vansittart Bowater, May 24th, 1914.

Magazine *Overseas* started in 1915.

During the war the Overseas Club, which on its amalgamation with the Patriotic League of Britons Overseas, became the Overseas League, collected £1,000,000 for War funds.

In 1921 purchased as its War Memorial and Headquarters for £45,000 Vernon House, Park Place, St. James's Street, London, S.W. 1, from the Dowager Lady Hillingdon.

Vernon House opened by H.R.H. Duke of York, February 2nd, 1922.

Overseas League incorporated by Royal Charter, March 1922.

Visit of Their Majesties The King, the Patron of the League, and the Queen to Vernon House, March 28th, 1922.

Purchase of adjoining premises, 4 and 5 Park Place, 1924.

Official opening of 4 and 5 Park Place by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, March 10th, 1924.

1930. Scottish Headquarters of the League at 100 Princes Street, Edinburgh, opened by H.R.H. the Duke of York.

On July 2nd, 1931, 21st Birthday Banquet of 1,000 members of the Overseas League in Royal Albert Hall, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales present.

The Empire Fellowship, founded during the Wembley Exhibition, became affiliated to the Overseas League, March, 1933.

Among the Aims and Objects of the Overseas League :—

To draw together in the bond of comradeship British subjects the world over.

To encourage individual service to the British Empire.

To promote patriotism, in no spirit of hostility to any other nation, and to emphasise all that the British Commonwealth of Nations stands for and to assist in maintaining its honourable traditions.

Motto : Empire Service.

Members' Creed :

Believing the British Empire to stand for justice, freedom, order and good government, we pledge ourselves, as citizens of the British Commonwealth of Nations, to maintain the heritage handed down to us by our fathers.

Present Membership	44,325
Annual Income	£78,855

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